

# Working Together

*Relatedness and Economy amongst the Rukai of Taiwan*

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines the mutual construction of relatedness and the economy amongst the Rukai of Taiwan. A person is imagined as the embodiment of a couple's collaborative efforts at work, and hence practices of work are central to making a person the site of relatedness. Significantly, work refers to both human efforts and human agency - in contrast to ritual performance. With respect to their experience of capitalism, I suggest that money not only embodies the fruit of labour for the Rukai, but is also thought to be a living thing with fertility that is important for domestic reproduction as well as the realisation of inter-house relations.

Rukai workers consider work for kin paid by piece rate to be the enactment of kinship morality rather than undertaken just for payment. With kin-employer's provision of gifts to kin-workers, an act of exploitation is transfigured into a practice implying reciprocity. Above all, workers emphasise conviviality in doing piecework in the company of kin, and such work enacts domestic sociality in the Rukai context. By contrast, labour paid in daily wages is viewed as toil, and a wage is seen as 'bitter money'. This is associated with experiences of unreasonable labour time on the shop floor. With the payment of a daily wage, moreover, an employer is sensitive to workers' speed of work in order to secure surplus value. Given that both parties recognise the fact that work paid in wages is grounded in the pursuit of monetary gain rather than on kinship morality, I argue that the rupture between relatedness and the 'economy' comes into being.

In the wake of increasing unemployment, the moral code stemming from kinship in turn underpins the provision of food to jobless kin. Meanwhile, the Rukai expect the government, viewed as a superior, powerful caretaker, to offer them opportunities of employment in terms of 'having pity on' the unemployed. However, Rukai engagement in wage labour is, strikingly, experienced as bodily affliction. I argue that Rukai participation in charismatic healing practices for the purpose of repairing distress and affliction is tantamount to implicit resistance to the encroachment of capitalism.



## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis was solely composed by me and that the contents are the product of my own work.

## Acknowledgements

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## Note on Orthography

In the wake of the indigenous dialect policy stipulating the teaching of dialects as part of schooling, the Rukai—by reference to the investigation done by an expert of Austronesian linguistics, Paul Jen-kuei Li—succeed in obtaining the Romanisation of Rukai dialect. The mark ‘added prior to a vowel denotes glottal stop.

### Vowels

Orthography	Equivalent to English
a	a <i>in</i> art
i	i <i>in</i> it
o	o <i>in</i> go
e	e <i>in</i> the
w	oo <i>in</i> book
y	y <i>in</i> yolk

### Consonants

Orthography	Equivalent to English	Orthography	Equivalent to English
p	p <i>in</i> pear	th	th <i>in</i> thank
b	b <i>in</i> bag	s	s <i>in</i> sac
t	t <i>in</i> toy	z	z <i>in</i> zebra
d	d <i>in</i> duck	h	h <i>in</i> hat
k	k <i>in</i> kit	m	m <i>in</i> mat
g	g <i>in</i> egg	n	n <i>in</i> neck
tr	t with tongue rolled	ng	ng <i>in</i> thing
dr	d with tongue rolled	l	l <i>in</i> lip
c	tz	lr	l with tongue rolled
v	v <i>in</i> van	r	r with tongue rolled

## Abbreviations

- HCART *Household Censuses of Aboriginal Reservations: Taromak, 1930 & 1931.*  
The Police Station of Taromak.
- HOAA *Historiographies of Aboriginal Administration.* (5 Volumes) Office of the  
Governor-General of Taiwan.
- SART *A Survey of Aboriginal Reservations: Taromak, 1928-32.* The Police  
Station of Taromak.



## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The Rukai of Taromak, an Austronesian-speaking people, inhabit a valley plain of Southeast Taiwan, across the sea to the south-east from China. As an ethnic minority group under the rule of the Han-Chinese of Taiwan, the Rukai are both politically and economically marginal. In daily life kinship relationships remain dominant but are often mixed with the idioms of capitalism. I was often struck by the fact that the Rukai all too often spontaneously express a day's time in terms of a daily wage. Even a talk I gave about fieldwork at Academia Sinica, an obligation for receiving a fieldwork grant, was construed by the Rukai as what I needed to do in exchange for a wage. During the first couple of months of my doctoral fieldwork, I was quite anxious about the viability of my research because the Rukai seemed to me to accommodate the logic of capitalism to a greater extent than I had expected. Their incorporation of and accommodation with capitalist economic practices and related values are all too common in many respects of the social life in Taromak, so that there is sometimes no distinction from other villages in Taiwan in terms of economic practices.

My intention in this dissertation is to investigate how the entanglement and intersection of kinship and capitalism is expressed in myriad contexts. More specifically, the objective of my research comprises multiple levels of constructs of relatedness and work practices: on the level of the making of personhood; that of a house and the domestic economy; that of inter-house connectedness; that of a house and the labour regime; that of the Rukai and the government; and finally, that of the Rukai and the capitalist economy.

This chapter begins with the social and physical settings of Taromak in relation to administration, cultural policy, schooling and Christianity. Next, it moves to examine how Rukai social life has been presented in previous studies in both local anthropological and historical literature, and, following on from the preceding research, examines the inseparability between relatedness and (culturally defined) work practices. I then give an overview of their diversified economic practices in a contemporary situation and propose regarding 'work' as a cultural category of human activities in order to capture the complexity of the economy as well as its relation to

making relatedness. In effect, this view is closely bound up with my own fieldwork experience with respect to Rukai relatedness, gender as well as work. Drawing on these experiences and then reflecting on the anthropological literature, I propose that relatedness and capitalism are mutually constructed, for the reason that both hinge upon the cultural constructs of personhood, gender, and work, although in distinct ways.

### **The Rukai of Taromak: A Picture in Relation to Architecture, Administration, Schooling, and the Church**

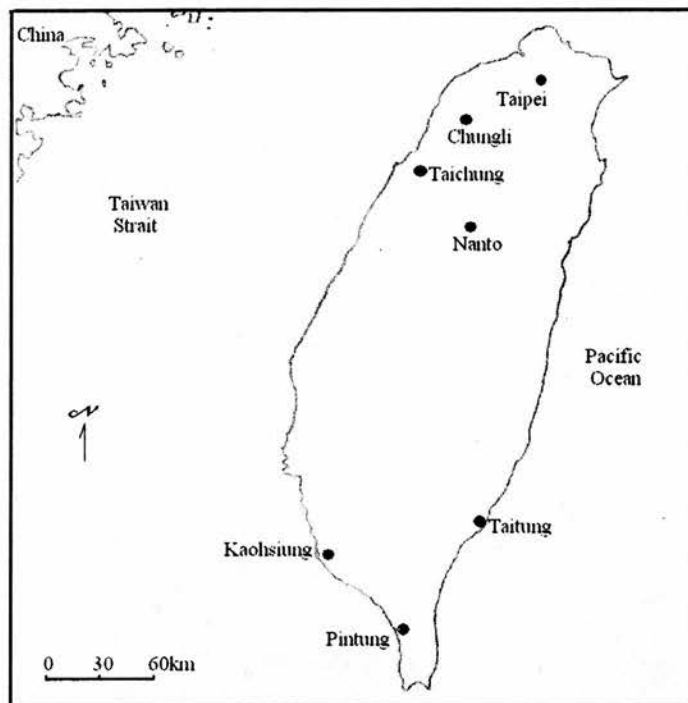
I was introduced to Taromak for the first time when doing my first degree in anthropology in Taiwan in January 1994. Under the instruction of a lecturer of the department, my fellow students and I stayed in Taromak for two weeks to practice some skills of ethnographic fieldwork as the course required. From July 1998 to January 1999, I returned to conduct fieldwork for five months for my Master's thesis. Afterwards, I conducted my doctoral fieldwork for eighteen months during the period from July 2003 to June 2005.

#### *Taromak under administration*

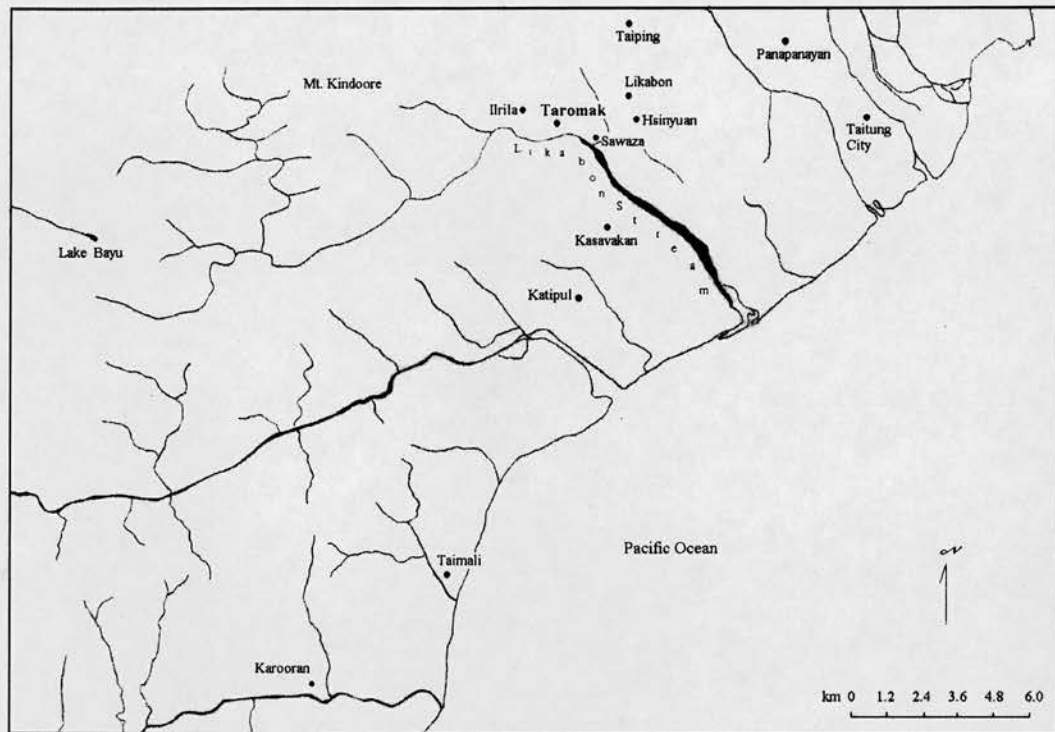
The village of Taromak is situated in Beinan Township of Taitung County, and is surrounded by several Puyuma settlements, such as Savakan, Katipul, and Likabon, one Paiwan settlement called Sinyuang, and other Taiwanese ones (see Maps 1 & 2). Geographically, it is built upon the valley plain of the Likabon Stream, a major source of water for Taitung city. The two main streets of Taromak converge and lead to a main road connecting Taitung city and Savakan and other towns in southern Taitung County.

According to the official figures from the Beinan Township Administration Centre, in 2005 the total population (including Chinese) in Taromak was 1,415, and there were 468 households. Amongst 375 indigenous households, there were 616 male residents and 542 female ones. In Taromak there are several households where there is inter-ethnic marriage with the Paiwan, the Puyuma, the Han-Chinese, the Bunnun and the Amis, but the great majority of villagers are the Rukai, whose ancestors were either born in Taromak or migrated from other Rukai settlements in Pintung.

The colonial government also moved people of different ethnic identities—mainly the Paiwan—from other places in Taitung to resettle here for the sake of



Map 1 Taiwan



Map 2 Taromak and surrounding villages

mutual surveillance, complementary to the policing system. After 1949, a small number of soldiers from Mainland China, in the wake of the takeover by the Kuomintang (KMT) government, settled in the nearby towns, and some of them married young Rukai women.

The Rukai of Taromak are inclined to downplay any diverse origins by stressing that all villagers are 'inhabitants of Taromak' (*swa-Taromak*) to create a sense of unity, though immigrants occasionally assert the origins of their ancestors from somewhere else. The Rukai of Taromak emphasise that village residents, including immigrants of different ethnic origins, should share a sense of unity (*ea ka lrolrodra*, meaning 'one single path') in order to promote the spirit of cooperation and harmony rather than encouraging differentiation amongst villagers. The image of the whole community as an imaginary house made of kin, whether real or not, is often deployed to highlight the value of unity.

During my fieldwork, the great majority of villagers with whom I worked were Rukai, yet some of their parents or kinspersons are not Rukai, being Paiwan, Puyuma or Han-Chinese. Almost all the villagers aged over forty know well the origins of the other residents, and I do not bother with ethnic identification as I do not intend to pursue this issue. Rather, I acknowledge the influence of inter-ethnic marriage in my description of the way residents lead their lives, for instance, the deployment of a red envelope with money as a wedding gift for kin is obviously from the Taiwanese custom.

#### *Intermingled social fabrication: social architecture, schooling, and the church*

During my several stays in Taromak, I was often surprised and even shocked by the changing appearance of buildings and the architectural landscape in different times. My gradual accommodation to the 'mixed' nature or hybridity in many aspects of Rukai social life begins with the recognition of what silent buildings and landscape reveal to me with respect to the on-going relationships between the village and the administration, the capitalist economy as well as Christianity, in different historical phases.

On the road leading to the village, an officially made archway engraved with the village name in Chinese comes into sight. It was erected in 1997, upon it there are the patterns of a Formosan lily (*Lillium formosanum* W., which a skilful hunter is entitled to wear) and a hundred-pace snake (an ancestral figure), which are taken to be 'the symbols of the Rukai'. In 1997 the monument in memory of the fire in 1969 was erected at the entrance to the main street of the village, and the village guardian spirit engraved in slate was also set up nearby (see Plate 1.1). As described in local





Plate 1.1 The slate of the guardian spirit

anthropological literature, the guardian spirit slate was covered with high weeds and some tobacco was put there as a sort of offering to it in the 1960s (Hsieh 1965). Next to the monument, the Communal Classroom for Native Artefacts was built later to provide evening classes on making porcelain beads and pottery for adults. Indeed, these classes are one of the projects sponsored by the KMT government for the sake of ‘fostering communal autonomy’.

In October 1994 the KMT government announced a novel cultural policy—‘Community Infrastructure Establishment’, influenced by similar projects developed in the UK (Community Architecture), Japan (Machitsukuri) and the United States (Social Architecture)—in response to continual requests from both local activists dedicated to keeping records of local history and the opposition party, and millions of dollars were offered to both associations and academic units to take part in projects to foster people’s sense of community by communal participation in local affairs as well as to foster communal autonomy. Under the rubric of ‘Culture as a kind of industry’ the main aim of all the small projects with a government budget was to create a unique local culture in the hope that the members of each community would come to appreciate local history and ‘culture’ (the making of a sense of community) as well as making residents ‘self-sufficient’ by marketing products characteristic of their ‘culture’, promoting tourism or indigenous artefacts/cuisine (C.-N. Chen 1995). In the case of Taromak, several academics from National Taitung University and local associations have since arrived to conduct related projects, and the landscape of Taromak changed, or was remade, in response to the wider social, political and economic environment.

The primary school, behind the guardian spirit, is situated at the entrance of the village, opposite a vast rice field cultivated during colonial times. It was first set up under colonial rule as an official agency for colonial civilisation in 1916 (HOAA Vol. 4: 655; SART 1928-32: 3). Inside the campus, a building for a collection of Rukai artefacts—including garments, some old photographs of the former settlement and wooden kitchen utensils as well as a huge wooden carving plate on the front of the building, all of which were made by local artisans or donated by villagers—was built in 2000; its interior was more like a miniature museum, thereby becoming a site for tourism.

The rice fields opposite the guardian spirit were established in tandem with the colonial relocation project; the Japanese government recruited the Rukai as *corvée* labour (*agolri*) to build the irrigation canals in an attempt to promote rice cultivation with double cropping at that time, whilst the Rukai of Taromak planted millet and other crops such as taro and sweet potatoes at the same time (SART 1928-32 Table 1;

HCART 1931 Table 3.1). The Rukai were relocated to the current site of the village during the period from 1926 to 1928 and then from 1941 to 1942 (Hsieh 1965).

Some Rukai have converted part of the rice fields to grow millet, maize and vegetables. Some have even built their houses amid the rice fields, but most inhabit the clusters of houses in the village. The house style—except for several newly-built two- or three-story houses, built of concrete and with tiled facets—was one-story, square, bricked, and monotonous, and they were apparently built with similar technology to houses in other Taiwanese villages. These were built with the assistance of the KMT government in the aftermath of the devastating fire in 1969, in which the great majority of the houses were burnt down—all except for two houses and the Catholic chapel.

Apart from the renovated or rebuilt ones, most houses were side by side in individual blocks crossed by narrow lanes, and thus it was easy to hear all kinds of sound from the neighbours, such as quarrelling or children being woken up. The toilet-bathroom was built outside the house, and only the better-off houses had indoor modernised bathrooms. Returning to the village in 1998, I found that the walls of several houses have been painted with pictures from a legend about the marriage of Balr'eng, a girl from a noble house, with a man transformed from a hundred-pace snake, an ancestral figure, or with icons standing for 'the Rukai' such as Formosan lilies, ceramic urns (a marriage payment from a noble house), hundred-pace snakes, or the scene of a young lady on a rattan-rope swing (*talrai'yisi*) in the millet harvest rite (a public occasion for young couples to show their affection). Some houses were decorated with wooden figurine plates, especially those of close kin to the noble houses. With the funding from the government, every house has an urn-shaped wooden plate on the door, upon which the name of the head of a house is engraved.

The establishment of streets is planned as well: there are two main streets in the village, each of which has a church, a Presbyterian one and a Catholic one respectively, whilst the Methodist Church is at the end of street, and they were asphalted as in Taipei. In 1958 the Presbyterian Church of Taromak was the first Christian mission to build a station, followed by the Catholic Church in the following year. Another Presbyterian station was built in the former settlement Ilrila (see Map 2) in 1970 after the floods that destroyed the bridge connecting Taromak and Ilrila, and hence another station for converts over there was needed. This station was re-built in the village of Taromak after most residents moved to Taromak, and it was named the Presbyterian Church of Ilrila. By the 1980s, the Methodist church had been built on



the fringe of Taromak, and the population of converts was relatively small.<sup>1</sup> With subsidies from the government, different schemes of street beautification and rearrangement with plants and flowers are under way, and they are related with different local political factions.

The Centre of Community Activities, a two-story cement building, is situated almost in the centre of the village, and was rebuilt after the fire. The space on the ground floor is the administrative office for the head of the village, whilst the one on the first floor is the men's house. Next to it is a building for holding village meetings and activities like celebrating Mother's Day, and it is open to all the villagers. Its front façade and the roof are covered with thousands of pieces of slate, material used in some houses (those of the nobles in particular) when the Rukai still lived in the old settlement prior to the relocation in 1926.

At the end of the street, a site along the bank of the Likabon Stream (see Map 2) was cleared for holding the millet harvest rite in 1996, and some houses used it to hold a wedding feast when they had many hundreds of guests coming. The land next to this plaza-like place is used for cash-cropping or individual planting of millet.

Indeed, the mixed appearances and styles of residential houses speak of difference in wealth, which is clearly recognised by the villagers. Whether rich or poor, the Rukai are keen on furnishing their houses beautifully. Many houses were converted into two-story or even three-story ones soon after they received loans from the banks or the Association of Mutual Aid, originally a Catholic association set up in the hope that the poor could borrow money at very low interest. Actually, it is accessible to all villagers. Yet, those who were unable to afford a real house only bought the steel plates to which Rukai people have easy access to build a house so that the host would be exempt from property tax, because that kind of building is not officially defined as a 'house'. When a house was not roomy enough for their daily activities but they did not have enough money to expand it, some residents just enlarged their houses by setting up long tree or bamboo trunks covered with waterproof canvas in the lane. Still other people had their house 'sold' to kin in order to repay debts from previous business. In much daily conversation, aspirations for a dream house often surface, and even domestic life with children (and grandchildren) afterwards is imagined as if everything accordingly went well as long as the wanted house was built.

During term time, it is easy to tell the time in the village by the ringing of the school bell, and the school grounds are accessible to everybody. Before 1995, the

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the converts in the Methodist church migrated to Taromak in the late 1970s from another Rukai settlement, Ali of Pintung, southern Taiwan.

playground was the venue for the annual millet harvest rite in July, and it was also a place for people to practise the performance of the dance for that rite.

Many middle-aged Rukai people, adolescents, youngsters, and children speak Mandarin with a sort of Rukai accent. Their parents and grandparents were forced to learn Japanese in the colonial era, and these aged people were also required to learn Mandarin at primary school after the takeover in 1949. It is not uncommon for grandchildren not to be able to understand their grandparents perfectly and *vice versa*, though in daily life they are very close to each other in that the parents leave their children in the care of their aged parents. Even though the teaching of Rukai dialect has been a required part of schooling ever since 2000, many children and youngsters still speak Mandarin in their daily life, for most television programmes and pop music (one main form of entertainment in the village) are in Mandarin.

Given that villagers of different generations use different dialects, I spoke the Rukai dialect, my foster mother acting as my interpreter for the first half of my fieldwork, in the interviews with the aged residents, whereas I used Mandarin when I needed to interview younger villagers or even children who have limited Rukai vocabulary. My foster mother also assisted me with my recorded interviews. At the same time, her elder brother, who has taught the Rukai dialect at the primary school of Taromak, helped me with my transcription.

There is another aspect of how schooling affects the sense of time with respect to both the establishment of the closeness of peers and the making of adulthood in terms of marriageability. Since the Japanese era onwards, the Rukai of different generations are inclined to identify those who attended school in the same academic year as their peers (*tabelre*); people of similar ages will gather together and enjoy each other's company rather than making themselves an exclusive group isolated from others. Intriguingly, moreover, the Rukai construe the timing for adolescents of both sexes who go for initiation or collective labour exchange by reference to their graduation from primary school, both during colonial rule and at present. But many Rukai parents or grandparents show little consent that the maturity of a person or one's status of marriageability could be achieved by the project of schooling only. Indeed childhood and gender identity in Taromak have always been associated with work practices across generations.

Apart from schooling, the advent of Christianity came to shape domesticity in terms of the replacement of the guardian spirits of a house with things redolent of Christianity. Except that members of the noble houses of Lr'avalys and Lra'aloko, whose heads were the colonial headman and the pre-colonial chief respectively, never went to any church because of the observance of the ritual performance of the

millet harvest rite (*kalra lisya*), a great majority of the houses shared the experience of attending services or the Mass.<sup>2</sup> Most of them pinpointed their experience of getting healed by asserting saying prayers in the collectivity was the reason why they adopted Christianity; in other cases, they simply joined the church activities along with their kin. The most impressive thing is that before they decided to convert, they needed to inform their ancestors at the indoor altar of this message, and then the priest would come to take away the ritual object and a pebble standing for the guardian spirit (*lekem*) of a house, both of which were indicative of idolatry, and instead place the Bible, the cross or a rosary as the symbol of protective power for a house and its inhabitants. There have been several cases of houses or individuals leaving the churches afterwards owing to interpersonal fission; more often than not, they 'converted' to another church.

### **The Village as an Imaginary House: The Rukai in Colonial and Local Anthropological Literature**

Under Japanese rule, the ethnic identification of indigenous people had correlated with the project of administration ever since 1895. Amongst all Austronesian-speaking peoples in Taiwan, the Rukai were described in the colonial literature as a hierarchical society composed of nobles and commoners, and were thought of as a sub-group of the Paiwan. In 1935 the designation of an official ethnic group 'the Rukai'—based on linguistic differentiation from the Paiwan and certain cultural practices (e.g., rituals and rule of inheritance)—was given to the people who lived in the old settlement of Kapaliwa (Mabuchi 1954; Utsushigawa *et al* 1935). Prior to that, ethnological studies of the Rukai were found in those of the Paiwan, and a sketchy overview of the people of Taromak was provided. It is no surprise that colonial studies of the Rukai settlements were focused on social stratification (for instance, Utsushigawa *et al.* 1935), partly due to the adoption of indirect administration by the colonial regime, and obtaining knowledge of local political organisation came to the fore. Concern about Rukai social organisation in terms of stratification has predominated much of the anthropological research on the Rukai after 1949, as we see below.

In addition, given that the project of colonial policy in the area of Taitung,

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<sup>2</sup> The heads of these two noble houses are brothers, and the head of Lravalyws house was appointed the headman of Taromak under the Japanese colonial regime because the then head of this house, Lazeng, as many elders recalled, helped Japanese police to confiscate guns from all the men of Taromak. Nevertheless, the head of Lra'akaloko house was indeed the founder of Taromak.



where the Rukai and many other indigenous peoples inhabited, was about 'civilisation' rather than repressing them by force, colonial documents about the people of Taromak kept records of the process and consequences of colonial administration regarding rice cultivation, resettlement, monetary regulation, and policing (SART 1928: 5). Indeed, these colonial measures are taken to reveal the historical precedents of Rukai people's daily life in a contemporary context throughout the dissertation.

Nowadays, the people of Taromak do not particularly dissent from being officially identified with the 'Rukai'.<sup>3</sup> In the day-to-day context, they either identify themselves as 'inhabitants of Taromak' (*swa-Taromak*), or 'people of the mountain' (*kacalisiya*) with reference to such things as naming practices, dietary practices, work disposition, and the expression of generosity and pity towards the poor and pitiable. Their identification of themselves as 'Rukai' is clearly made when outsiders are around. I use it for convenience's sake throughout.

In both colonial and local anthropological literature, one importance polemic is about kinship, a fundamental principle of social grouping in Taromak. The previous reports on Rukai kinship from the 1950s to the 1960s (C.-L. Chen 1955; Hsieh 1965, 1967, 1968; Wei 1963) point out that a family is understood by reference to the inheritance and succession of property, but it is found that both residence and participation in domestic rites (stated as 'non-kinship relationships' by the author) are even more central to property succession than kinship ones (Hsieh 1968: 30-47). Obviously, the presumption of this thesis lies in the unexamined yet prevalent view of taking sexual procreation to be constitutive of 'kinship relationships'. But the significance of residence in the succession of a house leads me to investigate how a house, as a key symbol to the making of relatedness in Taromak, is culturally constructed, as well as how a community is made and imagined as an imaginary house (Cheng 2000), the thesis of which is in effect influenced by both Claude Lévi-Strauss's (1987a, 1987b) analysis of 'house society' and Janet Carsten's (1997) research of the cultural construct of kinship/relatedness, and which hinges upon the multiplicity of meanings of a house in the Rukai context. What is more, hierarchical relationships are expressed in the relations between a house of origin (the nobles) and a derived house (the commoners), and thereby the headman of the noble house is conferred with the duty of care towards the commoners, as the realisation of the moral imperative of kinship.

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<sup>3</sup> Some Taiwanese indigenous peoples either insist on replacing the official ethnic identity with the local term for 'people' (e.g., the Dawu in replace of the Yami), or strive to become an independent group from the colonial classification which lumped together several residential groups (e.g., the Truku are now independent of the Atayal).

Another issue regarding the reproduction of social hierarchy amongst the Rukai in general is focused on how certain privileged ornamented items are involved in the reproduction of the social hierarchy, which is based on the ethnography of the Rukai settlements of Pintung (Hsu 1991). The Rukai are known for their exquisite embroidery and gorgeous accessories, as well as their craftsmanship in making sculpture. The commoners who would like to adorn themselves with these privileged accessories either dedicate a boar to the chief (in the case of men) or prepare a variety of gifts such as food and precious objects or money (in the case of women) in exchange for the usage of ornamented items indicative of personal qualities such as bravery in men and chastity in women. The conclusion is quite obvious: the Rukai headman monopolises the ownership of privileged accessories indicative of the ideal gender construct, as a kind of 'symbolic capital' (1991: 29), and therefore the hierarchical relationships between the headman and commoners are reproduced by the exchange of privileged accessories.

In spite of the possibility of regional differences,<sup>4</sup> and of the fact that the Rukai are profoundly involved in the capitalist economy so as to acquire more access to ornamented items with money, the mechanical view of identifying the privileged garments and accessories with an emblem of social ranking fails to answer the following questions. Why are the Rukai very keen on decorating themselves beautifully? Why is, or more precisely was, the making of gender—maleness, in the case of Taromak—closely bound up with the connection with the head of a noble house? More fundamentally, why do personal qualities such as bravery and chastity need to be made known to others through clothing and adornments? Not intending to answer all these questions in this dissertation, I would suggest an alternative viewpoint to consider the relationships between adornments and personhood without ignoring the influence of the capitalist economy. For the Rukai of Taromak, the inner qualities of a person need to be known to others for them to admire his or her deeds and personal qualities much as a house needs appropriate decoration, heirlooms, and even commodities as the manifestation of the qualities of its inhabitants, and in some cases, specific virtues are granted from the headman, a person embodying divine power.

However, what remains unexplored is how relatedness and personhood are

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<sup>4</sup> Hsu's thesis only accounts for the authority of the headman before the 1970s, and for the case of men in the sense that they were given a headdress of a Formosan lily in the context of Taromak. However, at present, many Rukai people are in outfits taken to be that of a noble house, and these clothes and accessories are either bought from peddlers living in the settlements of the Rukai or the Paiwan—whose clothes are quite similar to the Rukai—in Pintung, or made to order by a local workshop.

bound up with various economic practices in Taromak. What puzzled me most during the fieldwork is that procreation of a baby is construed metaphorically as the result of a married couples' performance of garden work, as well as the mutual affection between two parties. The absence of interpreting the process of making a baby in the idioms of body parts or substances invokes a question: if native notions of personhood, gender, relatedness, and the domestic remarkably make sense with reference to work, then what does 'work' mean after all? Let me return to their economic practices to spell out what work means in the contemporary Rukai context.

### **Work as a Cultural Category of Human Activities: Economic Practices in Contemporary Taromak**

The chief measures of economic colonisation were the introduction of rice and money. Wet rice—the Rukai did grow millet and hill rice—appeared in 1926 under colonial rule, and earlier in 1915, state-issued currency, Japanese yen, was introduced to regulate people's transactions (mainly trade and taxation) for the sake of keeping track of economic conditions of the colony (HOAA Vol.2: 304). The vernacular term for money is *aiso*, originating from a Dutch word which means Spanish silver (Zentloius 2000), and it recapitulates the appearance of money in the wake of the expansion of Dutch mercantile capitalism and colonization in insular Southeast Asia in the seventeenth century. Not until the Japanese regime was monetary policy set out to regulate all transactions between the Rukai and the government agencies, as well as private business, with the state-issued currency. In 1915 the colonial regime launched the Transaction Office for the Uncivilised (*ban goigisho*) in Taromak to instruct and regulate transactions with money. Nonetheless, several cases of private bartering took place sporadically in Taromak, and the police force was entitled to impose fines as punishment (SART 1928-32: 34). That is, colonial economic measures employed commoditised transactions for the sake of creating colonial subjects as people capable of conducting transactions with state-issued currency, a symbol of colonial rule.

Since the land reform policy in 1965, to work on the land was taken to be a dominant economic practice for the sake of domestic expenditure rather than reproducing social ranking between the nobles and commoners in Taromak. At the same time, to grow different types of cash crops in response to the demands of the market accords with the view that garden work (cash-cropping or a subsistence economy) is the most prominent practice of culturally defined 'work' meant for



domestic reproduction. During this period, lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus*) was the main crop grown in several villages of Taitung, and in Taromak there were many houses that relied on it for their sustenance for a couple of years. Recently, betel pepper (*Piper betel* L.), roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa* L.) and Chinese toon trees (*Toona sinensis*) are the main cash crops in Taromak. Several middle-aged women either hand pick or sort betel pepper leaves because work with betel pepper is a perennial form of agricultural labour so that vacancies are often available, whilst some others engage in seasonal agricultural labour like handpicking roselle, and unemployed middle-aged men will join them once in a while.

Another kind of agricultural labour is contract farming. Some Rukai people did do contract farming in areca nuts for a short while in the 1970s, but the weather and the limited capital invested in them prevented the betel farmers of Taromak from competing with those in Pintung and Nanto. Conversely, there are still rice contract farmers who have cultivated a paddy for a decade or longer. Contract farming is done in a manner whereby a farmer and a buyer, either merchants or the government, reach an agreement on the fixed price of cash crops, and the farmers have to hand in the crops, but do not need to worry about price fluctuations on the market. For Rukai rice farmers, contract farming, though without promising big fortunes, at least secures a source of cash income from work, as well as enabling them to keep a portion of the rice for domestic sustenance.

Some Rukai are self-employed. There are six groceries (there is another bigger one on the border of the main road), and two of them are run by Chinese veteran soldiers with their Rukai wives. During the daytime, different vans with either daily foodstuffs (vegetables, pork, and seafood from outside peddlers) or pastries from a local bakery go around the whole village. Some villagers occasionally sell home-grown greens door to door on their motorbikes in the late afternoon.

Several restaurants or eating-places have been opened during the period of fieldwork, and those equipped with Karaoke become places for kin and friends to have private talks, have fun or celebrate birthdays with singing and alcohol. Even the practice of inviting bereaved family members for dinner at the houses of kin (*a kivavang*) in the hope of easing the grief of the bereaved is held in such eating-places. In addition, women with knowledge of tailoring run garment-making workshops, in which they produce made-to-order ethnic clothes and headdresses as well as innovative accessories such as mobile phone cases in 'ethnic' patterns (mainly a hundred-pace snake and a Formosan lily).

Meanwhile, considerable numbers of able-bodied Rukai people, including adolescents and middle-aged people, have migrated to the cities of western Taiwan in

search of jobs. Due to their lack of higher education or trained skills, most of them only find manual jobs, such as factory operators on assembly lines or building site workers. There is a continuous flow of Rukai youngsters moving to the cities in search of manual labour. These people migrate to cities such as Chungli, Taichung and Kaohsiung for work, and often they settle down there, though only working for a couple of years in some cases. Very often, they will introduce their kin to work with them, and it is no surprise that their jobs involve manual labour, such as construction work on building sites, and working on factory assembly lines; only a very small number of people are able to do managerial tasks in small-scale family factories.

Recently a few well-educated people with a high school or college diploma have been employed as fixed-term contract workers in government sectors or as a teacher at pre-school or primary school. Younger women with basic medical knowledge often work in care centres for elderly people or in nearby hospitals as fixed-term workers.

With the monetary aide and 'education' of several consecutive projects in connection with 'Community Infrastructure Establishment' as noted earlier, one-day ecological tour packages in Taromak are designed to attract tourists as well as raising funds for the Association of Communal Development of Taromak. In recent years, at weekends one can sometimes find some local tour guides in ethnic clothes followed by non-Rukai tourists enjoying some houses embodying 'Rukai-ness', the scenic hillsides, and Rukai cuisine.

For those who stay in the village, still others become self-employed by running grocery stores, betel stands, restaurants of Rukai cuisine, or food stands, and some of them also either engage in seasonal labour or even hire workers to do cash cropping on their behalf. Many Rukai adults often hold the jobs of different kinds at the same time (being an employer outside the village while an employee in the village); on the other hand, some people are employed only for a while, being unemployed at other times.

However, a policy of welcoming two-year immigrant workers from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam after 1990 corresponds to, or even indirectly edges out, the opportunities of employment for the Rukai, and certainly the social problem of unemployment is connected with the economic recession in Taiwan at the end of twentieth century (cf. Lan 2006). More Rukai people were sacked and then returned to stay in the village to perform seasonal agricultural labour, or to offer help in the tasks of their kin, such as work in the eating-places run by kin.

Therefore, the types of occupation that Rukai people participate in are currently quite diverse: contract rice farmer, cash cropper (both piece-rate and time-rate work),



contract nursery care, subsistence farmer, seasonal agricultural worker, governmental clerk, engineer, plumber, carpenter, electrician, building worker, pre-school teacher, and a variety of self-employment. What is more, as far as an individual person is concerned, in some cases the state of employment and unemployment often oscillates between the two extremes, whereas in other cases their identity as an employer or an employee is also context dependent. The highly diversified structure of occupation leads me instead to scrutinise what their economic practices have in common, rather than analysing any single occupation or economic system *per se*.

I therefore suggest that the Rukai regard both garden work and wage labour (both manual and mental) as practices of work, *twa lavai*, which originally means 'doing garden work', and which is closely bound with the making of domesticity in multiple ways, materially and symbolically. As regards how wage labour is construed in a local context, I take the point made by John and Jean Comaroff (1987): 'the experience of wage labour was of needs to be filtered through indigenous notions of human activities and the nature of work' (1987: 194). This enables me to examine how work is culturally constructed in order to refute the instrumental conception of labour in the capitalist economy under the Marxist tradition (Ulin 2002), and even more significantly, to illustrate how culturally constructed working practices are associated with wage labour. The concern with both different conceptions of work/labour and the relations between domestic life and workplaces lead me to ask some further questions. How do Rukai people perceive their labour? What kinds of activity are seen as 'work'? Or, conversely, do all human activities amount to 'work' in a local context? If not, we need to probe the defining features for the conception of work in contrast to those of locally defined 'non-work' such as play or ritual in the Rukai case. Furthermore, we need to attend to the circumstances in which labour is not seen as labour, that is, where a person's investment in work is misrecognised as something else. For instance, Turkish women's labour in the garment-making factory is not regarded as a proper work but as what they 'traditionally' do (White 2000, 2004), and the case is similar for Indian female lace workers of Narsapur (Mies 1982). Namely, the boundaries of (culturally defined) work, wage labour, and the domestic are blurred, vague, and permeable. In brief, my analysis of Rukai people's work practices involves simultaneously both practical and ideational aspects of 'work'. This approach enables me to delineate not only the realistic aspect of work practices in association with social reproduction, but also how capitalist work practices and economic process are culturally mediated. In effect, historians show that people's conceptions of work/labour have not been historically coherent when the workings of historical forces and wider economic arrangement are taken into

consideration (Joyce 1987; Whipp 1987). In anthropology, David Parkin (1979) notes that the categorisation of work is made sense of in a local context and that some assumptions such as the dichotomy between work/labour and leisure will in turn be unsettled. More than that, attention to how the notion of work is culturally constructed helps us to enquire into why in some societies domestic work is excluded from the category of 'work' (Moore 1988).

Above all, my exploration aims to collapse the unexamined distinction between work and domesticity as well as that between economy and kinship. Attention to the indigenous work practices enables me to show how the divide between wage labour and domestic work takes place in a local context.

*Working together: creating intimacy and memory and alleviating differences in power*

To conduct similar practices of work in the same workplace or in the village often becomes another way, in addition to tracing kin relatedness, to make connections between people as co-workers, though in most cases they are at once co-villagers and kin to each other. Much the same holds true for cases where many Rukai teenagers are inclined to look for jobs in the same workplaces in order to continue their friendship and be supportive of each other. Even in the 1960s and 1970s, a desire to work with companions, alongside their parents' authority to force them to do child labour, has been construed as the main reason for them to seek manual work in cities. Even participating in my fieldwork in the village is construed as a sort of work. When I was due to finish my fieldwork in 2005, a female Catholic of my age had a long talk with me after the Mass, and then she suddenly said to me, 'Ael'es (my Rukai name), don't forget me. Don't forget that we have worked together for your dissertation!' I was in tears on hearing her words. At several farewell parties, the salience of the remembrance of closeness through working together came to me again and again, and they improvised on the theme of remembrance and memory in the lyrics sung to me—the Rukai are talented in this—and brought tears to my eyes.

During my fieldwork, I was impressed by the fact that in garden work or work in the collectivity, Rukai people are inclined to create a cheerful and hilarious atmosphere by bantering and joking or sometimes singing or even dancing during the course of their work. My awkwardness at garden work and mispronunciation of difficult yet unusual words often becomes a source of amusement, and I always laughed at their jokes as good-natured fun. My foster mother, her children and kinspersons often commented on my enjoyment of their jokes about my

awkwardness as an expression of amicability, for they often presume all scholarly persons to be arrogant and serious, as well as to have no sense of humour. More importantly, my identity as an educated woman are somewhat less daunting and much closer to them as a result of our amusement at my poor performance, and I myself could be deemed to be a person in terms of my personality instead of my education, which is always indexed with the meaning of power/potency for the Rukai.

The division of labour is made by reference to relative physical strength instead of gender or sex *per se*. In garden work, everyone is quite relaxed with cross-sex co-workers, and they banter with each other and joke with sexual innuendo without embarrassment or annoyance, and comparatively, the Rukai express quite as relaxed a relationship to cross-sex persons in garden work as their Malay counterparts (Carsten 1997). Yet, if we take into consideration that the division of labour in the fields is strength-based instead of sex-based in the Rukai case, then another connotation could possibly be that in the practice of garden work for domestic reproduction, cross-sex workers are sharing similarity in that the differentiation in power/skill/potency in work is downplayed whilst bantering and sex-innuendos play up the difference based on sex. Therefore, cheerfulness and joviality at work create both intimacy and closeness amongst co-workers by neglecting differences in work ability, at least at the moment of working together.

In the enjoyment of conviviality, co-workers share a sense of closeness and even intimacy (with women in particular) so that differentiation in terms of education or other indicators of personal ability/achievement is less conspicuous than on other occasions. Working together is thus tantamount to having a good time and then becomes a shared memory. Above all, intimacy and closeness from working together consequently make social differentiation less acute in terms of skill, ability, education, or power, though this is not always the case in some other day-to-day situations.

Moreover, the Rukai case allows me to pursue the issue of gender constructs in a comparative perspective in comparison with cases from Southeast Asia, since gender difference often correlates with cultural constructs of power (Errington 1990), by which women are often politically disadvantaged but their dominance in economic affairs cannot grant them power in competition with men. I would further argue that the power difference also applies to economic practices but the mechanism to alleviate such a difference is to create intimacy and closeness amongst cross-sex persons as much in co-workers as in married couples, for the latter are construed as an ungendered whole to downplay or veil the asymmetry in power between them by



means of accentuating their joint efforts.

However, more often, the difference in individual abilities is recognised in the work process, and often serves as the basis of the division of labour. Strikingly, the discrimination of an abler one from others even takes place amongst siblings. In 2004 when I asked Tina Cumaliya over lunch in her garden to tell me interesting stories that she heard in childhood, she was at first very shy and embarrassed and told me that she was not good at storytelling. She explained that when she was young, her grandparents appointed her brother, instead of her, who was thought to be cleverer than the others, to memorise the stories or legends in the hope that he would tell others. What is more, during the millet harvest rite, the annual event *bukas*, a marathon for men and boys, is taken to be an occasion to demonstrate one's potency (*lekem*) over others. Rukai parents and grandparents are very enthusiastic about talking about how powerful (*makec'eng*) their children are, despite the fact that these adults often emphasise that the *bukas* is just a game instead of a serious race.<sup>5</sup> During my fieldwork, some Rukai of both sexes who know Chinese described the one who is powerful as 'a hero', and then immediately added that a woman who is potent enough is also entitled to be a heroine just as a man is, which harks back to what I stated earlier about gender difference often being expressed in the idiom of potency.

Adults (men in particular) complained about other villagers flaunting their knowledge on public occasions like village meetings. What is more unbearable is when someone intentionally shows no respect to the others in attendance by denying others a chance to express their opinions. This is 'to kick the rear of [one's] knees' (*di'isi rek'ece*), referring to subordinating others by disregarding them. This bodily metaphor implies that a person of power violently beat his/her social other by way of the abuse of power as if he/she exerted brutal physical violence towards others, and this way of domination often brings forth criticism from the defeated party. The Rukai could accept their defeat in fair play, for instance, a race or competition, and the defeated is thus described as 'defeated by the potency [of another one]' (*kiya lekem*). Indeed, being a superior in the context of Taromak means to be a figure who is willing to listen to others (the knowledgeable or elderly in particular) and who cares for the powerless rather than exhibiting coercion or arrogance. On the other hand, some who are talented in either communal affairs or economic activities sometimes endeavoured to keep a low profile so as not 'to invoke envy' (*kiya salra*) from antagonists and prompt them to conduct acts of malevolence by way of

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<sup>5</sup> In pre-colonial time, the champion of the *bukas* was given the role of a messenger to communicate between different settlements in the mountains.

witchcraft to damage or destroy them.

It seems that people's sensitivity to power difference on the level of interpersonal relationships parallels the fading prominence of the headman of the noble house in Rukai social life, especially in both communal affairs and the domestic economy, at least before the advent of both local elections and land reform policies. In 1946 the introduction of the election of the official head of a village corresponded to the decline of the influence of the headman as a quasi-official title in pre-colonial times, especially since the candidates for election were appointed, or at least approved of, by the KMT government. In addition, one consequence accompanying land reform and taxation is that social ranking between the nobles and commoners through the practice of tribute payment has been on the wane ever since. One economic implication of these policies is that every house is allocated a plot of land under the name of its head to cultivate grain for subsistence, and accordingly this undermines the noble's entitlement to land of all categories in the village as well as the legitimacy granted him to collect tribute (*swalro*) from commoners. In the absence of a mechanism to reproduce social ranking between nobles and commoners as in the pre-colonial era, my attention is directed to how the idiom of power/potency difference is employed to speak of interpersonal interactions in everyday life. I suggest that the creation and expression of mutuality, conviviality, and closeness in the performance of work consequently plays an important part in eliminating the prevailing differences in social relationships. Put another way, kinship mutuality through working together is continuously evoked and strongly supports the equality of each house in garden work.

## The Process of Fieldwork

### *Overture: moving into a house to start making social connectedness*

Since this village is quite large in terms of population, I adopted the method of extended cases by focusing on several houses to see how they lead their lives with kin. In so doing, I could find further suitable informants by the mechanism of kin networking. Making acquaintance with villagers from a house as the starting point and tracing connectedness through the paths of both the maternal and paternal sides are how I established my knowledge of people's connections there, and I think this is also the way in which a Rukai understands his/her social world in everyday life.

My foster mother, a friend of my university lecturer, was my interpreter before she adopted me, and I also learned the Rukai dialect from both her and her second

brother, who had worked with some local anthropologists who have written several essays on this village as discussed earlier, prior to my arrival in 1994. She married a mainland Chinese soldier in a marriage arranged by her mother, much the same as for many Rukai women in the early 1960s. Her mother and maternal kin are close to the house of the current headman while her father and paternal kin are commoners.

During my fieldwork, I tried to leave the village every one to two weeks to return home to tidy up field notes, print photos, investigate possible theses, draft follow-up questions, and to keep my daughter company when I decided to have a longer break from the village after intensive work. Every couple of months I emailed a report to my supervisor in the UK to let her know my progress, and from her response I found some clues for further investigation. Once in while I went to Taipei to discuss ethnographic material with several senior colleagues (from anthropology and sociology) in order to sort out its implications for my intended research. I found it fruitful to reiterate similar material to different people to obtain their opinions and comments, and this manner of coping with diverse ethnographic phenomena continued even beyond the end of my fieldwork to the process of writing it up.

*The path of a name: two modes of relating*

My experience of Rukai naming practices is associated with two modes of becoming kin or one member of someone's house in Taromak. Initially, everyone used my Chinese nickname and none of my foster kinspersons ever mentioned giving me a Rukai personal name. One winter morning in 1998, my foster mother told me how the name of a well-meaning friend would become a personal name of a Rukai house. 'For example', as she said, 'though you are "*ailang*" [Taiwanese], you are like my child and are on good terms with my [birth] children and kinspersons. [...] Over time, my children who recognise you as a member of my house will probably give the name Wei-wei [my Chinese nickname] to one of their grandchildren. Then you will be "a member of my house" (*tatana lri*)'.

However, when I started my doctoral fieldwork, a distant female kinsperson one day asked me whether or not my foster mother had given me a Rukai personal name. After my reply, she thought of a female name related to the maternal side of my foster mother. This female name bearer is a pretty woman of a noble house known for being cunning yet having relationships with different men (a sort of *femme fatale*), but this distant kinswoman did not mention the biography of that name. When I mentioned that event to my foster mother, she then became infuriated. One reason is that the right to name a person is in the hands of the named one's (birth or classificatory) parents or grandparents, but that kinswoman, aged over fifty, is of my



generation. In the meantime, that name is ‘too high’ (*mab’elreng*) for a woman of a commoner’s house, even though her maternal kin are closely related to the noble house named Lr’abalyws, the house of the current headman. Above all, my foster mother did not appreciate the biography inherent in this name, and nor did she think that the name suited my personal qualities. Soon she and her elder sister decided to rename me ‘Ael’es, a name that is closer to the origin of her paternal house as well as being compatible with my qualities.

Afterwards, every kinsperson who met me on a variety of occasions would tell me about another namesake in their house, and try to make some connections between me and them by drawing commonality: ‘Ael’es is nice-looking; she is industrious in garden work; she is a dutiful and strict person who often takes the role of a leader of *maisah’olro* (a collective labour exchange amongst young women); she is a spirit medium; and she studies well at school and is knowledgeable. All my living namesakes greeted me warmly when we met as if we shared a more particular intimacy than with others; it seems that a gathering of individual namesakes comes to form a collective person called ‘Ael’es. Moreover, when many young girls and I practised the slow jogging with peculiar body movements in the *giyag’ilre* (a jogging like parade in the practice of *maisah’olro*, see Plate 2.4), several female elders commented that I was talented in doing the *giyag’ilre* because ‘the namesake of ‘Ael’es is talented (*malrik’ilri*, meaning being clever or smart or doing something beautifully) in it’. Through naming practices, it seems that I share similar personal attributes and talent of my namesakes across Rukai history, and, even strikingly, these qualities are said to be part of my disposition and skill in work. My experiences of being included as a member of someone’s house express different modes of inclusion and transformation with regards to making relatedness.

### *Being a gendered person*

Amongst 375 indigenous households and 1,158 residents, the number of households that I am familiar with is 91, and the residents with whom I have had intensive conversations and whose biographies I have obtained number 202. For those with whom I am not particularly familiar, I at least know their genealogical relations with my familiars.

Not surprisingly, I interviewed more female residents informally than male ones, and this is associated with the fact that a woman’s conversation with a man or men often takes on the meaning of creating closeness or a liking between the sexes. I was advised that at a social gathering it is appropriate to receive a glass of alcohol or drink from a man, for it meant that I was thought of as a lovable person. I was quite

conscious of such an atmosphere starting to ferment—I was often asked with the question of marrying a Rukai man, was once proposed to in marriage and was courted by men of different ages, though sometimes in a joking manner—so that many of my interviews with male youngsters or married men could not last very long because too much conversation with a married man would incur his wife's jealousy while with an unmarried one it would turn into courtship. Much the same is true for other women on different occasions. It seems that a relation between gendered persons is forged predominantly through the creation of (kinship) intimacy in terms of courtship, marriage or verbal expressions implies or hints at it.

Aside from that, I observed that between cross-sex married people there is implicitly no giving or receiving of any gifts in a tangible form, such as a handkerchief or hairpin. Exchanges of a similar kind are said to develop affection or love affairs. Not to mention that I often declined offers to give me a motorbike ride from men other than my own kinsmen as in the evening I always walked alone back to the house where I stayed in Taromak. As a result, I found it safer to talk with men who are grandfathers.

Moreover, my experience of gender difference in Taromak is also related to the constriction of my movement in social space. The most obvious restriction is that no women are allowed to approach the men's house (*alakoa*) so that I could only observe what they did in the yard open to all villagers. In other social spaces, such as in village meetings or in the place for collective labour with many other villagers around, I could have access to talk with unmarried men about their work and daily life. In the same vein, women could not go hunting—this being legal only for two weeks during the millet harvest rites since 1998—along with their partners or husbands, and more strictly, men could not have sex for three days before hunting. I had been warned often that the violation of taboo concerning the hunting practice would either hurt the hunters or make them return without any game. Interestingly, towards the end of my fieldwork, one married male adult offered to take me hunting if it would be helpful for my research, but I gently declined his suggestion. In addition to the violation of taboo, the act of going to the mountain with a cross-sex partner alone is always imbued with the connotation of having sex in Taromak. What is more, if either of us had had an accident in the course of hunting, all the villagers would, I could predict, attribute it to my violation of taboo. No matter how critical the practice of hunting is to the construct of maleness, I felt happier to stay with the women to look at what the men do from the position of their wives or partners. I instead spent time talking with men while they gathered after work as well as conducting informal interviews with men of different generations individually.



More prominently, gender difference in Taronak is particularly invoked in the circumstances and practices redolent of maleness, such as the men's house and hunting, and at the same time, maleness is also associated with work practices in the men's house; in the same way young girls conduct exchange of work in gardens in the collectivity to make themselves marriageable women. Above all, the making of femaleness and maleness respectively demand individuals to participate in the collectivity of same-sex people in specific work practices, in contrast to the case of a married couple whose joint efforts rather than individual contribution to food produce are particularly stressed. As a consequence, the relationships between gender and work in different sets of relatedness (unmarried people and married couples) acquire different configurations and connotations (work for acquiring marriageability or for domestic reproduction). That is, even in the domestic sphere, the multiplicity of relations between gender and work can be captured insofar as the cultural peculiarity of kin relatedness is taken into account. In what follows, I turn to how attention to the cultural constructs of gender, work/production, relatedness, and the domestic sphere will shed fresh light upon theoretical elaboration of the relation between kinship and the economy by way of reflection upon the literature in anthropology and wider social science.

## **Kinship and Economy in the Anthropological Literature**

### *How does kinship work as economy?*

Amongst the studies of the economic process in anthropology, the legacy of Marxist anthropology puts forwards the agenda of exploring the interrelationships between kinship and the economy in pre-capitalist/non-Western societies in the hope of bringing out the historical process and mechanism of the evolution from pre-capitalist societies to capitalist ones. Indeed, the view that kinship serves as the basis to organise economic activities is all too common in the anthropological literature (cf. Firth 1939; Malinowski 1922). However, theoretical attention directed to capitalism either regards it as a factor or catalyst for social change and thereby leads to the modification of the spheres of exchange (e.g., Bohannan 1967), or merely applies the concepts originating from the (bourgeois version of) capitalist economy to make sense of the pre-capitalist economy (e.g., Burling 1968; LeClair 1968). By contrast, the significance, and also stimulation, of Marxist approaches to the economy lies exactly in that they set forth a scrutiny of the relations between the economy and kinship (or other dominant forms of social relation) as well as the

mechanism of how they complement and contradict to each other in the course of history, and certainly there is a discrepancy in the account for the mechanism of evolution or transformation (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1978; Godelier 1971; Meillassoux 1978a, 1978b, 1981; Terray 1975).

Simply stated, the central problematics of Marxist approaches to economic anthropology are as follows. How does the superstructure/kinship turn out to be the prime mover of infrastructure, or take on the dominant role whose social logic governs the function of the economy? Under what circumstance does kinship cease to work as the dominant social logic in the organisation of economic activities and accordingly take on a secondary role, whereas the logic of the economy obtains its autonomy as the predominant principle of capitalism?

Refuting the then received wisdom of seeing the economy as an autonomous sphere of social life, Maurice Godelier argues that in pre-capitalist classless societies, 'kinship relations function as production-relations' (Godelier 1972: 93). Therefore, as a determining role of the economy, kinship occupies a dual position of simultaneously infrastructure and superstructure in pre-capitalist (classless) societies. In that case, kinship is *internal* to the economy. But at another level, kinship remains *external* to the economy in the sense that procreation and sex exclusively belong to kinship. Moreover, since previous kinship relations will fail to correspond to the emerging function in the wake of economic expansion, it accordingly takes on a secondary or auxiliary place in the economic activities whilst new production-relations (e.g., politics or religion) fill the place in lieu of kinship (1972: 95-6).

In addition to the evolutionary preoccupation in Godelier's thesis, it is obvious that kinship, taken in a sociological instead of biological sense (Godelier 1972: 198ff.), is viewed as a *fait accompli* so that kinship relations function as the base for labour recruitment whereby the rationality of the economic process makes sense. That is, Godelier is focused on the functional side of kinship with respect to the economy in the sense that the reliance of the workings of overall social structure hinges upon the dynamics of the economic process. As for other aspects of kinship such as procreation, Godelier puts them aside, for its externality to the economy predicates its irrelevance to the working of the economic process.

With the recognition of the salience of kinship in relation to human procreation, Claude Meillassoux (1981), in particular, indicates that the domestic community forms the basis for the making of capitalism in that the domestic community is not only the site of producing labour-power for capitalism, but also the social fabric for its social reproduction. His point is in effect a critique of Marshall Sahlins' analysis

of 'the domestic mode of production' (the DMP). As described, the DMP is geared only to its own livelihood due to its inherent underproduction and therefore it is in essence 'an antisurplus system' (Sahlins 1972: 82) as well as 'an antisociety' (ibid: 86) in terms of failing to perpetuate itself unless, when driven by kinship reciprocity, it conducts exchange with like households. Olivia Harris (1981) contends that Sahlins' stance of taking a household as natural, pre-social, anti-kinship, and anti-reproduction is equal to the denial of the possible contribution of a domestic unit to social reproduction. Put differently, a society is created out of the negation of the anti-sociability of the domestic unit, which manifests the assumption that 'Public Benefit derives from Private Vice; the good of the collectivity is served by the evil propensities of the individual' (Smith quoted in Bloch & Parry 1989: 17), an unquestioned presupposition of the relationships between a society and individuals/a domestic unit.

What is more, Harris (1981) argues that Sahlins' description of the clear-cut discontinuity between inter- and intra-household relations in terms of different forms of exchange underpins and justifies the view that makes a domestic unit economically isolable and independent, which indeed relies on the categories of commodity exchange. Henrietta Moore (1988) also mentions that Sahlins' assumption of pooling and sharing as characteristic of inter-household relations will obscure the real nature of these relations, and at the same time precludes possible enquiry into how they really work. Indeed, I indicate that at issue is in what sense production, in terms of the calculation of the deployment of labour power, occupies the centrality of a domestic unit to become its defining feature.

In contrast to both Godelier and Sahlins, Meillassoux (1981) argues that the domestic community—through the institutions regarding the manipulation of women as 'the living means of reproduction' (1981: xiii)—secures social reproduction through the dual process of both the physical reproduction of human beings and the reproduction of persons as producers ('labour power' in his own term). The domestic community, as he concludes, is built upon both the simultaneity of production and reproduction and their interactions. Of the utmost importance, reproduction is the 'dominant preoccupation' (1981: 38) to which all social institutions are geared, but it remains subordinate to production which in the final analysis determines the overall social organisation (cf. Engels 1972[1884]; Morgan 1871). Above all, he indicates that kinship in terms of both women exchange and human reproduction is neither the residual form of the economy nor a factor external to the economy, but organically integrated to the formation and practices of the economy. However, Meillassoux's approach is quite mechanistic and reductionistic (Peletz 1995), and also the



invisibility of women in his work draws much feminist criticism (cf. Moore 1988).

As Olivia Harris and Kate Young (1981) contend, given that men's control over women is central to social reproduction, the nature of sexual division of labour in the domestic community deserves careful scrutiny, and in the meantime, Meillassoux also neglects the fact that the labour force is socially constituted (Edholm, Harris & K. Young 1977). Besides, Meillassoux's lack of attention to both the intricate relations between productive labour and reproductive labour (Harris & Young 1981; Harris 1981; Mackintosh 1988[1979]) is much criticised, and at the same time he fails to recognise that the relation between domestic and non-domestic labour is not historically constant (Moore 1988).

Let me turn to the relation between kinship and economy in Meillassoux's formulation. If kinship and reproduction are dominant in social formation while the economy still plays a determinant role, then this is predicated on the supremacy of production over reproduction in the changing condition of the economy. In the final analysis, kinship is subsumed under the logic of the economy in that Meillassoux considers the prominent meaning of human reproduction is to reproduce labour power, a particular conceptualisation of personhood inherent in Marx's *Capital* (1976[1867]). In this sense, being a person in the domestic community is much like being one in capitalism since a person and one's relation to production is in essence identical, though the content of the work appears to be different. The question still remains: what is the nature of the domestic community? This relates to how we make sense of the economic process in a fresh light.

#### *What is 'the domestic' all about?*

The key to contrasting formulations of the relations between the domestic community and capitalism/the economy, I suggest, lies in how a domestic unit is conceived in the capitalist economy. The feminist critique of Marxist approaches to the economic process (capitalism in particular) is concerned with the ignorance of domestic work (childcare in particular), and then takes domestic work in a political light to explain women's subordination in capitalism (Boserup 1970; Delphy 1977; Gardiner 1975; Hemmleweit & Mohun 1977; Hartmann 1981; Mackintosh 1981, 1988[1979]; I. Young 1981). Another line of criticism has addressed the economic implications of the domestic sphere with respect to production in capitalism to acknowledge its contribution (Beneria 1979, 1988; Beneria & Sen 1988; Coulson *et al.* 1975; Molyneux 1977; Redclift 1988; Seccombe 1974, 1975; P. Smith 1978). Similar discussion over the status of women and role of domestic work in non-capitalist societies takes place within anthropology as well (Harris 1981; Harris

& K. Young 1981; Leacock 1978; Mackintosh 1988[1979]; Sacks 1975, 1979).

As Marilyn Strathern (1988) points out, what underpins both feminist and Marxist analyses of domestic work lies in their deployment of the metaphor of commodity exchange, in which labour is inseparable from the worker, thus the product of the work is owned by women, and therefore the question of appropriation and exploitation takes place in the conjugal relationship. That is to say, the nature of the domestic sphere is mistakenly made sense of in the light of capitalism. Given Strathern's exploration of the metaphysical foundation of the domestic sphere in the context of the Melanesian gift economy, I shall take her thesis in an inspirational manner rather than an instrumental fashion, that is, by implication, the significance of the domestic sphere does indeed involve at once the cultural premise concerning work and the division of labour, gender/personhood, the relation of a person as a producer and the product of work, as well as how the distribution and consumption of produce are carried out in different social contexts. Therefore, it is possible for me to examine in what manner it participates in or remains distinct from capitalism.

To address this issue, I intend to tackle the following question: in what sense is domestic work held to be productive or unproductive? More precisely, in what kind of theoretical parameters does production take on the privileged connotation to explain the nature of domestic work? What follows is that once the domestic unit is granted with association with the capacity of (culturally defined) production, how do we make sense of the interrelation between alternative meanings of production, human reproduction and domestic reproduction? These questions are about the divide between family and household, and at the same time about how kinship and the economy are conceptualised along the divide. I first briefly speak of the theoretical implications and analytical impediments of such a divide. Then I look into how production, domestic work, and kinship are construed to relate to one another in an ethnographically grounded manner by drawing on cases from insular Southeast Asia.

### **(1) Family : household:: reproduction: production:: kinship: economy?**

The investigation of and debate over the nature of a domestic unit involves what is assigned to the basic unit of analysis with respect to the intended social sphere under examination, kinship or the economy for instance. Ever since Sylvia Yanagisako (1979) called attention to the cultural specificity of a domestic group to reject a universal definition of family, this view should be commonplace, or non-questioned, within anthropology. Gerald Creed (2000) maintains that there is no such necessity of redefining household or family when it comes to re-evaluating the economic significance of family. He identifies attributes indicative of kinship with



family commitments in explaining why across cultures people adopt specific strategies or manipulate family relations in their performance of economic activities. Despite the fact that he notices how material forces exert an influence upon family, neither does he capture inequality amongst gender and members of different generations, and nor does he account for the issue of exploitation.

Therefore, I indicate that Creed's discussion of the economic implications of the domestic unit is reflective of diverse appearances of the configurations of how the economy relates to kinship. In addition, his analysis is unable to capture the cultural dimensions of their interaction due to the vagueness of the idea of family commitments, or more precisely, his employment of such an idea itself is indeed empty of cultural content. Hence, I suggest that the relations of kinship to the economy are more functional and strategical than what is presented in his analysis. At issue is how kinship and the economy are culturally constructed within anthropology, and it is possible for us to grasp what is behind the strategies or manipulation of kinship relations in the economic process. To make this point, I first begin with the implications of the divide between family and household on the issue of the relation between the domestic sphere and the economy.

In her review article regarding how the concept of 'the domestic sphere' is conceptualised within anthropology, Yanagisako (1979) indicates that a domestic group (including family and household) is concerned with two kinds of activities: those pertaining to preparing food (production and consumption), and those about social/human reproduction. I agree with her on the point that the domestic sphere is not independent of the public sphere nor is it free of political implications as other anthropologists demonstrate (cf. Carsten 1997). I instead focus on another dimension of the divide between family and household with respect to economic activities, that is, the separation between the principle of procreation and that of production, which is central to the debate over the role of the domestic unit in the project of theorising the economy/capitalism.

Despite the fact that some scholars argue for Marx's affirmation of the value created by domestic work (e.g., Seccombe 1974), the common view towards production remains that domestic work is seen as unproductive labour opposed to productive labour/wage labour in capitalism. Even though some have tried to account for the value of domestic work in the logic of the labour theory of value inherent in *Capital* (Marx 1976[1867]), feminists contend that such an approach cannot explain women's subordination in the economy grounded on their persistent standpoint that domestic work like childcare is a mechanism that weakens the value of women in capitalist production. Maureen Mackintosh (1981, 1988[1979]), for instance, points

out that the divide between production and reproduction confounds the fact that many activities taking place in human reproduction demand productive activities. She also insists on the separation of kinship (marriage and filiation, or family relations) and economic relations, and considers the household (not the family) to be 'a mediating institution' (1981: 13) of these two distinct sets of relations to explain why domestic work is devalued as unpaid labour. Put another way, the insignificance of domestic work, alongside the domestic sphere, in relation to economically productive activities is thought to originate from its incompetence in economic production as wage labour, even though the latter finds its reproduction in the former.

Why should the capitalist denotation of production have a privileged meaning of work across social spheres? Why is the value of work unitarily bound up with the acquisition of a wage, a token of commodity exchange? At what point is the demarcation between production and reproduction neatly drawn? Given that domestic work is seen as 'unproductive labour', we need to ask: what are the cultural and ideological underpinnings of the division of labour along the lines of gender insofar as overwhelmingly women are closely associated with the performance of domestic work?

Let me draw on a case from the legacy of the cultural economy to address these questions. Stephen Gudeman (1986) proposes that the pre-capitalist economy works as culture, in other words, how economic practices are understood culturally. The cultural tenet of 'economic practices', he suggests, such as growing, land spirits, and the sharing of grains from ancestors' land, work as the key to capture the conception of economics in a local context. His analysis also suggests, though implicitly, that kin relatedness, taken in the sense of being like a repertoire of metaphors and values concerning production and reproduction, allows us to explore how these metaphors emerging from kinship are associated with economic practices. I thus suggest that Gudeman's point leads us to pay attention to the cultural premise of productive activities, fertility, and reproduction. In addition, in order to acknowledge the economic implication of the domestic sphere, we need to contextualise a domestic unit in the historical, social, and cultural settings in which it is embedded.

## **(2) Contextualising a domestic unit**

As Harris pinpoints, the unquestioned attitude of seeing a domestic unit as a natural unit indeed neglects the social and historical environment in which it is embedded, not to mention ignoring the capacity of the domestic to participate in social reproduction (Harris 1981). This recognition harks back to the issue of the interrelation between the economy and kinship mentioned earlier, for it reminds us

that the stark divide between one sphere and another fails to capture the subtle relations between them as well as being unable to acknowledge the socio-historical contextualisation of the domestic sphere (Harris 1981; J.L. Comaroff & J. Comaroff 1992).

Given that the sexual division of labour is not universally similar, I suggest placing the issue of sexual division of labour under careful scrutiny by way of looking at the cultural construct of gender and its relation to the division of labour. For instance, in insular Southeast Asia, agricultural labour usually demands the cooperation of men and women, and neither of them dominates in the fields. At the same time, the division of labour amongst participants is not neatly drawn along the lines of gender (Atkinson 1990; Carsten 1997; Gibson 1986; Jha 2004; Stoler 1977a, 1977b; Winzeler 1974, 1982), and therefore women sometimes do tasks which are preferred by men (Jha 2004). Besides, it is noticed that women are closely engaged with economic practices and monetary affairs (Brenner 1995, 1998; Errington 1990; Stoler 1977a, 1977b). I then start with both regional and theoretically informed ethnographic cases to elucidate both why and how the relation of kinship and the economy can be better understood when attention is paid to the cultural constructs both of personhood/gender and of work practices.

One interesting and challenging phenomenon from the reports on gender in Southeast Asia is the visibility of women in the marketplace as well as their close association with economic affairs alongside monetary exchange (Brenner 1995, 1998; Errington 1990). For instance, Javanese women are dominant in the batik industry and inclined to haggle in the marketplace, whereas men are more concerned with religious affairs and shy away from haggling at trade (Brenner 1998). Similarly, in the harvesting of rice, women dominate agricultural labour whilst men are found caring for children, cooking, and performing domestic chores for the reason that men are paid much less than women in agricultural wage labour (Stoler 1977a). Even in cash-cropping like growing cane, it is indicated that Javanese women and men work together rather than assigning cash-cropping as such to be gender related labour (Stoler 1977b). In some societies where men perform wage labour, like that of the Malays for example, the earned wages, seen as individual gains, are thought to be put into domestic reproduction through women's practice of the domestic work of cooking to feed members of houses. Put another way, money, a symbol of anti-kinship and anti-communal morality, obtains its moral connotation through long-term exchanges imbued with the kinship morality (Carsten 1989, 1997). In the light of this, it is fair to say that both the values concerning the domestic sphere and women as agents in domesticity serve as the mediator between the community and



economic forces. Despite the fact that Malay men's acts of consuming individual extravagances or luxuries is morally condemned, I would suggest that the influence of these acts implicative of individuality upon the making of domesticity and relatedness merits as much emphasis as the activities within the domestic sphere.

Attention to the domestic sphere and women does not imply that I unquestionably make an association between domesticity and women. For the Rukai, much as in many societies in insular Southeast Asia, men and women are thought to collaborate for the maintenance of domestic relations. In that case, the fact that women dominate the domestic affairs, far from implying any essentialist association, might better be understood as women taking the responsibility on behalf of their husband, as men do in some contexts like the village meetings (Carsten 1997). The significance of the domestic sphere as well as its relation to women is cast in the background of the imagery their counterparts use in other contexts, and both parts come to form an imagery of unity constitutive of what domesticity means in the Rukai context.

The re-conceptualisation of the domestic sphere in relation to the economic process enables us to cope with how reciprocity works as 'the indigenous category of exploitation' (Sahlins 1972:134). As indicated in recent studies (Bloch 1973; White 2004; Yanagisako 2002), the economic implications of kinship reciprocity/morality should not be underestimated. In particular, it is necessary to call attention to the possibility that reciprocity can disguise an act of exploitation, and then how it can be transfigured into moral imperatives to recruit kin for work (Bourdieu 1977, 1990, 1999; Sahlins 1972), even for wage labour in the capitalist economy. This point is particularly prominent in the case of the Rukai for the reason that reciprocity/mutuality is often summoned to account for their performance of wage labour for kin-employers and then their acceptance of a job at a lower wage. At this point, kinship is not only the principal network for labour recruitment, but also in partnership with the exertion of exploitation, thereby blurring the boundary of exploitation and reciprocity.

#### *The mutual construction of kinship and the economy*

As regards the relation between kinship and the economy, Marilyn Strathern (1985) proposes constitutive modes of the relation between kinship and the economy by looking at how person-thing relations are locally formulated in systems of marriage payment. By 'constitution' she refers to a relationship of mediation between two concepts or domains, yet such a definition implies that constitution 'refers to a single conceptual entity' (1985: 201). If this entity means a relation between them, it



also implies that 'they are to some extent still kept separate' (1985: 201).

According to Strathern's formulation, in non-capitalist societies which practise the system of brideservice (e.g., the Ilongot of the Philippines), labour is thought of as interpersonal relations grounded on labour/persons standing for themselves, thereby things failing to substitute for either labour or persons. As a consequence, kinship and the economy are constitutive of each other. By contrast, in the bridewealth system (e.g., Papua New Guinea), marriage payment in gifts at wedding is considered to stand for the bride or the part of the relations connected with her. In this case, kinship is 'a way of thinking about the economy and *vice versa*' (1985: 203). In capitalist societies, things and persons are made perpetually separate, though with the possibility of conceiving persons as things (e.g., labour); in that case, kinship is in turn separate from the economy. The condition for explaining kinship relations by reference to the economy is to make differences, but this case cannot take place the other way around. It is the case for capitalist society in the West. The final situation would be that kinship and the economy mutually collapse to become identical with each other as in the cases demonstrated by Godelier and Meillassoux. Put differently, kinship *is* the economy in certain social conditions, and significantly it is supposed to address 'the real differences in systems by which people organize relationships and establish separation among themselves' (1985: 205).

In other words, the symbolic strategies encoded in the trope of 'constitution' are deployed, as Strathern argues, to rethink the relations between kinship and the economy by unsettling the assumed separation of individual social life domains immanent in capitalist societies. One question follows from her analysis: in the wake of the advent of capitalism in non-capitalist societies, how do we configure the changing relationships between kinship and the economy if we fail to give equal weight to economic practices other than marriage payments as the construction of a 'claim' to or 'right' over women's labour? In the Rukai case, men's labour and garden work are immediately in confrontation with the capitalistic economy, another mode of formulating the relation of persons and things, whereas women's labour (domestic work) is influenced by way of its relation to men's labour. This necessitates, I would suggest, taking into consideration both the cultural construct of gender and its association with the division of labour beyond the system of marriage payments.

In the following, I move to the discussion of how recent studies of kinship, personhood, gender and the domestic sphere enable us to look at the relations of kinship and the economy in a fresh light, in addition to offering more solid foundation for the question of representing the relations between kinship and the

economy.

Another way to approach the relations between kinship and the economy in a contemporary context is to look into the work process to examine how these two dimensions take on their roles. This is partly inspired by labour studies in sociology, in which the issues of the politics of employer-employee relations and how exploitation on the shop floor takes place are mainly focal points to understand the working of the labour regime (e.g., Braverman 1974; Buroway 1979a). By contrast, anthropologists are more concerned with how 'cultural' factors—kinship in general—play off the economic practices. For example, Yanagisako (2002) focuses on the labour process and its association with kin relations of managers in a family firm in Italy. With regard to the relationship between the domestic sphere and capitalism, Yanagisako indicates that kinship and gender are indispensable to the profit-making of a family firm. Given the explicit emphasis of patriarchal inheritance in Italy, she conversely notes that both mothers and daughters are responsible for the nurture and reproduction of the family firm. More prominently, desire and sentiments—trust, betrayal, loyalty, and love—derived from both family and kin relations are taken to account for the fundamental motivation of the development of capitalism in Italy. As a consequence, she argues that the prominence of kinship and gender as well as their working upon the development of capitalism is extremely played down and even ignored in the theses of both Marx and Weber (2002: 15-22). That is, both kinship process and gender, the focal points of the domestic sphere, serve to anchor, articulate with, and intersect with capitalism, and even determine the trajectory of its development.

In other words, Yanagisako endeavours to show the centrality of kinship and gender in her account of the development of capitalism, yet her thesis is weakened by the elaboration of the cultural constructs of kinship and gender. She observes how important the roles of women, the mother-daughter relation in particular, and emotions are with respect to our understanding of capitalism, but her discussion of these relations and emotions does not show much of how they are constructed or constituted in the Italian way. This to some extent discounts her point that 'culture and capitalism [are] as mutually constituted processes' (2002: 6) in the sense that capitalism should be part of the construct of kinship/culture. What is more, her stance implies that capitalism is not so much bound up with culture as kinship is, the view of which has been criticised by historians who have been concerned with the historical precedents and cultural underpinnings of 'capitalism' in Europe (e.g., Le Goff 1980; Macfarlane 1989; Thompson 1993[1967]).

In the Rukai context, I rather call attention to how the cultural premises from a

domestic community (personhood, work, and reciprocity/mutuality) and the capitalist economy (different conceptions inherent in the piece-rate work and time-rate work systems) are brought to act upon each other in the economic process. The recognition of the culture of capitalism such as the form of wage and labour time gives a new dimension to the mutual construction of kinship and capitalism/the economy. Much as kin relatedness serves simultaneously as the basis of labour recruitment and the value and ideas for people's interpretation of experiences of capitalism, categories (a wage and labour time) and social relations (between employers and employees) characterised by capitalism in the economic process not only appear to be the imposition from outside, but also embody ideational registers in their working practices.

What is more, one question following from Yanagisako's focus on the class of managers is: what place in the construct of capitalism does the experience of workers occupy? Her claim to study the managerial class is said to complement preceding research that overemphasises the experience of the working class, but the complementariness in methodology is distinct from the substitution of peculiar experiences shared amongst the working class with respect to the working and development of capitalism. More critical is that what she takes to be the defining feature of capitalism (the profit making and its reproduction in the hand of employers) seems to be different from what it means to Marx (workers are responsible for the production of value), thereby neither of them share commonality regarding the objects of research. Nonetheless, in agreement with Yanagisako's theoretical attention to the significance of kinship, gender, and emotions in the exploration of capitalism, I would rather propose an alternative possibility of looking at workers' experiences of capitalism in order to examine to what extent and in what manner kinship and gender/personhood intersect with capitalism/the economy.

In order to capture the mediating, constitutive relationships between kinship and the economy in a changing situation, I therefore suggest that attention should be directed to how capitalistic production wields its influence—which is simultaneously social, historical, and cultural—upon the Rukai who do wage labour, since they are the immediate agents between capitalism and the local culture, moving back and forth between the two extremes. Above all, the exploration of the cultural constructs of personhood, gender, and work enables me to illuminate the complexity of the intersection between kinship and the economy. On the other hand, this makes possible for the examination of how their engagement in capitalism impinges upon Rukai practices and conceptions regarding personhood, work, and gender.



## Outline of the Thesis

Here I lay out the line of argument in my dissertation. In Chapter 2, I first investigate the mutual embeddedness of personhood and work practices. The Rukai stress now that both persons and houses are the embodiment of the joint efforts of a married couple. Since the image of a house demands and submerges the fruit of the work from a married couple, the equal contribution of a couple is marked with respect to domestic reproduction.

This then leads me to explore the nature of the practice of work in Chapter 3. Given that the division of labour in garden work is made on the basis of the relativity of physical strength, a woman's work at home (e.g., doing embroidery for sale) is considered by herself to be no more than domestic chores, which are taken to be less significant in domestic reproduction than garden work or wage labour.

Furthermore, I also examine the relation between work and ritual as well as that between work and play. I argue that practices of work denote the involvement of human efforts and human agency in the performance of activities such as birth, production, work, marriage and craftsmanship. In contrast, ritual performance emphasises the ancestral agency inherent to it, so that the ritual practitioners, such as the head of a noble house and spirit mediums, are tantamount to being the vehicles of ancestral agency necessary to deliver the effectiveness of ritual performance. At another level, the relations between work and play are more than antithetical. In effect, the position that an actor occupies in different sets of relatedness (children, adolescents, parents, and grandchildren) participates in the relational construction of the relations between work and play.

In Chapter 4, I show how money, seen as the token of the fruit of work, is imagined as a living thing with the capacity of fertility as well as embodying movement in the sense that it should be used to help kin instead of being accumulated. Thus, the possession of money by an individual or in a single house without taking it out to help kin is morally condemned. To avoid this moral dilemma, residents are inclined to build houses that can be left to descendants so that the aged will be remembered as their ancestors through this heirloom-like house which is made of their achievements in terms of what aged parents have done for their dependents in their life time.

Obtained from wage labour, money, however, should be also taken as being a wage, and other dimensions of its significance cannot make sense unless we take into consideration different modes of wage payment. Thus in Chapter 5, I examine how wages and practices of work in the piecework system are experienced, and also how



the Rukai consider their execution of work in such a case as more akin to the enactment of kinship morality. More significantly, I argue that people's experience of conviviality at work is taken to enact domestic sociality. By contrast, the experience of work in the timework system, which is discussed in Chapter 6, is thought to be toil whilst a wage is 'bitter money'. These views are experienced not only because the workers are driven by the rigid regulation of labour time, but also because the moral codes of reciprocity/mutuality and mutual aid are absent in the employer's acts of exploitation. In that case, I argue that the rupture between relatedness and the economy/capitalism comes in existence.

Drawing on Rukai people's experience of unemployment in Chapter 7, I then suggest that the inseparability of siblingship underpins the offering of help from better-off siblings to those who are socially deprived. Strikingly, whereas unemployed women can rely on the kindness and generosity of food offered by kin without causing much criticism, unemployed men are supposed to enact their maleness as the caretaker of a house by virtue of employment with a decent wage. In this regard, the ungenderedness of a married couple's labour for domestic reproduction is therefore taking on the gendered forms of work. Moreover, the Rukai tend to imagine the government in the figure of a caretaker because of taxation. The Rukai take for granted that the government officials or other power holders should have 'a soft heart' when they get to know how severe their condition of living is, thereby performing their duty of care to cope with unemployment.

Finally, I indicate in Chapter 8 that wage labour brings to the Rukai not only much-needed money for domestic reproduction, but also bodily afflictions. In the workplace, an employer's measures to extract more produce from a worker are obviously an exhibition of coercion, and thereby the form of resistance is their tactics to counteract the coercion of an employer's measure. Spouses are also influenced by their partners' experience of wage labour in daily settings. In the conjugal relationship, the husband's alcohol abuse habits due to unemployment, and even physical violence accompanying drinking problems, often inflict both emotional distress and bodily afflictions on the wife. Being either a wage worker or the spouse of a wage worker, Rukai women's collective participation in charismatic healing practices is thought to heal their afflictions in association with experience of wage labour (directly and indirectly). In the final analysis, I argue that their participation in healing practices embodies an implicit form of resistance to wage labour.

## Chapter 2

### Producing Persons

This chapter aims to investigate how the making of personhood is embedded in practices of work amongst the Rukai. More specifically, I will demonstrate that the native notions of personhood are not only a processual construction, but also hinge on practices of work, by which I mean the activity of doing or making in a local context. My attention to how people's work practices centre their notions of personhood originates from the fact that the Rukai construe the making of a person in the idiom of spouses' collective work in the gardens rather than in terms of 'sexual intercourse'. Inspired by the constructive perspective of personhood which stresses the centrality of cultural practices in the local construction of personhood (see Astuti 1995; Carsten 1997), I observe that in Taromak these cultural practices are closely associated with people's work practices, including doing garden work and housework. Here several critical questions arise. How is the making of a person progressively achieved through work practices? How do Rukai people conceive of work practices? Then, how do the features of work practices reveal the making or production of a person in a local context? The latter two questions will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, while in this chapter I focus on the examination of the embeddedness of the notions of personhood in their work practices.

Rukai people's emphasis on the significance of work practices in relation to the notions of personhood is in accordance with ideas about gender difference in insular Southeast Asia (Atkinson 1990; Carsten 1997; Errington 1990; M. Z. Rosaldo 1980). In Taromak, pre-pubescent children are viewed as ungendered in that doing house chores is equally shared amongst siblings. With their coming of age, adolescents are required to do different kinds of work so that their gender identities are differentiated. Amongst the Rukai, the crucial practice for making gender difference is that of work. A married couple's labour in the fields is regarded as an ungendered collaborative effort, for it is the unity, instead of separate contribution, of a couple's labour which is capable of reproducing the lives of their family. The elders of both sexes show strong interest in doing garden work in daily situations, and in turn they enjoy working in the company of their kin and companions. More strikingly, the deceased are also thought to do garden work in the world beyond, and therefore the living

dedicate a tiny plot of garden to them in an attempt to have the deceased feed themselves.

What is more, the multiple origins of a person as the product of a married couple's collaborative labour are clearly manifested in the provision of labour for the house of kin on the occasions of weddings. In daily situations, a person's multiple origins are submerged under the unitary identity as a member of one's parents' house, that is, a product of a married couple's work. At weddings, however, kin with a similar closeness to both the bride's and groom's houses are supposed to provide labour for both sides. In other words, the multiple origins of a person are called upon on the grounds that marriage, seen as a union of maleness and femaleness, demands demarcation and segregation amongst kin along the lines both of gender and of the distance of relatedness.

### **Spouses' work of making a baby**

My attention to the significance of work practice in the cultural construction of personhood stemmed from the phenomenon that the answer to my question about the making of a baby has been expressed in either the couples' having sex in the work hut or the mutual affections symbolised in the reddish juice produced by chewing betel nuts. Though from the pre-colonial period till the early 1960s, the act of eating millet was a critical rite for a bride and a groom to perform at their wedding (Hsieh 1965). In contemporary situations, at least during my fieldwork, the practices of both having sex in the work hut and chewing betel nuts were often given to me as the explanation whenever I came to the question of making a baby. Below, I describe how a person is made in relation to work practices of different kinds at different stages of the life course amongst the Rukai.

In Taromak, it is thought that a person is made by the spirit *twa 'omas* (meaning 'to make a person', and the Rukai use this verbal phrase as a noun). Analogically, parents are often seen as the creator of a baby according to the ontogeny of a person. What is more stressed is that the parents' child-rearing and raising of a baby into adulthood make them the creator of a baby in an earthly world.

Interestingly enough, the Rukai tend to deploy work practices performed by a married couple instead of the explanation of body parts to describe the making of a baby, and the baby they make is imagined as the product of a couple's collaborative labour. For instance, a baby dying young before teething is described as that its parents 'planted a sweet potato (*aw brasi*)', which means that its parents only

invested labour in producing it but did not cultivate it into a person. Being a person in Taromak relies on the physical growth of a baby indicative of the parent's care, and the physical indicator is teething. A baby who is starting to teethe is deemed 'a person' (*omas*) in Taromak, and a baby prior to teething is in turn not a socially recognised person. Furthermore, the death of a pre-teething baby was not followed by a proper funeral in contrast to the death of a person. Village residents tend not to announce the death of a pre-teething baby, and simply bury it without ceremony.<sup>1</sup> The metaphor of a sweet potato used to explicate how a baby is associated with a couple's work reveals not only how this baby is not a person yet, but also how the collective efforts of the parents' work in the fields contribute to the making of a baby.

Indeed, the garden (*angangada*), the space for doing garden work, is also the place in which a married couple have sex. Until recently, the work hut (*tawana*) in the fields has always been called the place for 'making a baby' (*twa lralrake*, *twa* means to do or make; *lralrake* a child or a baby). A married couple is thought to have sex in the hut during a break from work, for the rooms in their house are accessible to all family members and lack privacy. Almost all the married people I met in Taromak felt free to mention that a couple had sex in a work hut whenever we passed by someone's work hut in the garden. As for the process of the formation of a baby in a mother's womb or even the process of having sex, many female elders and my foster mother simply said that they had no idea about that, and my elderly male foster kin shied away from my enquiries.

Given that the local term *twa lralrake* refers to both 'making babies' and 'having sex', I presumed that this two-fold signification might be troublesome to them. I then tried other indirect expressions by asking questions about bodily parts inherited from parents, for example, as reported in the case of South India where children share blood and substance with both their parents but men transfer them via the semen whereas women do so via the womb and breast milk (Busby 1997a, 1997b, 2000). Or I presumed that I could gradually elicit a dominant symbol as a shared substance like the notion of blood as in the case of Malays in Langkawi (Carsten 1995, 1997).<sup>2</sup> To my dismay, the answer to my question of the contribution to

<sup>1</sup> In pre-colonial times, a baby who died before teething was not even buried within the indoor house burial area (*talreka*) along with the ancestors, but was simply buried underground near the hearth.

<sup>2</sup> In my Master's thesis (Cheng 2000), I attempted to draw a linkage between the consumption of millet and the notion of blood to interpret how relatedness is constructed. However, this interpretation failed to take into consideration the influence of marriage with Han-Chinese upon how the Rukai possibly learned or adopted the idea of 'blood tie' to explain how relatedness is constructed, especially when some informants tend to deploy ideas from Han-Chinese culture to explain several native ideas to me, such as the ghost in my previous fieldwork. In my doctoral fieldwork, I decided to re-investigate the similar issue to avoid my pre-occupation with the significance of the notions of blood and blood ties.



making a baby in terms of body parts or substance remains that 'there is no such saying about that'. Perplexingly, their relaxed attitude of mentioning who has had a sexual relationship with whom or of jokingly alluding to similar issues confused me whenever I was confronted with their apparent non-recognition of making a baby in terms of human sexual intercourse. This ambivalence towards sexual intercourse suggests to me that the villagers' thoughts on procreation might be implicated with cultural practices other than 'real' sexual intercourse.

However, one everyday lived metaphor regarding the cause of making a baby was often given to me in daily situations. Many Rukai people would draw the linkage between the habit of chewing betel nuts on the wedding day and how a baby is made. 'If there is nothing reddish (in chewing betel nuts), how can a couple make a baby?' The metaphorical linkage between them is made clear by what is thought to be an appropriate way to chew betel nuts. As I was told, the proper and viable way to produce reddish juice is to have lime and betel vine stem around an areca nut. If the juice is scarlet enough, elders consider that both of them show mutual affection and compatibility (*mah'oah'oa*) towards each other. It merits noting that the notion of showing mutual affection and compatibility particularly refers to the burgeoning of affection simultaneously from both sides, rather than one party showing affection to an unresponsive recipient. In other words, with the fact that these three items (areca nut, lime and betel vine stem) are perceived to be mutually compatible, a married couple who chew betel nuts can in turn make a baby. However, for the Rukai, the symbolic association between a couple and the set of areca nut/betel vine stem/lime is not understood as that of signifier-signified, that is, they do not say that the husband is like a betel stem and the wife is like an areca nut. It is more likely that the way these three things work as a single substance has the capacity to act upon and then transform the actors who share them.

What the Rukai stress most is that the union of different items/persons is capable of leading to mutual compatibility, which is in fact crucial to and viable for making a baby. Furthermore, the frequent physical togetherness of a married couple is thought to increase their mutual compatibility. Newlyweds are thought to pair with each other everywhere they go within the first couple of months of their marriage. It is believed that this physical togetherness would ensure that they have babies sooner, and thereby a married couple with their first newborn is qualified to build a house of their own.

Another way to bring forth pregnancy is adoption. If people do not want to adopt a baby from kin, another equally efficacious way is to take care of a kinsperson's baby in order to bring about a pregnancy. It is believed that a child will

bring forth a younger sibling as company. In other words, caring for a child, part of domestic work, would make the mothering woman pregnant with another. Hence, both the practice of parenting and the notion of a baby bringing forth its sibling possess the capacity of activating pregnancy.

*Naming practices and the both-sidedness of being a person*

As the product of the parent's collective effort, a baby was at the same time a node of personal qualities and dispositions inherited from both paternal and maternal kin. Addressing the qualities of a person, Rukai parents and grandparents always traced them back to *both sides* of kin otherwise it seemingly failed to demonstrate their origins from and connectedness with them. For instance, as Moni said to me, 'I 'take' (*malra*) my eyelids from my father's sister'. Or, 'my daughter "takes" her talent in drawing from my brother, so she acts as members of my mother's house do', as Dramalrai told me. 'The way my daughter leans against the wall is absolutely like what my sister does', said one middle-aged mother while we were chatting. Additionally, 'my grandson's way of talk definitely takes after my second son, though they have never lived together', said my foster mother when she described her daughter's son.

As observed but not explicitly expressed, if a child takes the personal name from the side of the paternal grandparents, then the child's other qualities, such as being good at painting, reading, singing, dancing, particular walking postures, the way one's body moves or the way one talks, would be considered to originate from maternal kin. However, the identification of the origin of one's personal qualities is not to make either of the sides gain supremacy over the other. Conversely, the both-sidedness of one's origins is grounded in the view that one side, say, the paternal side, could not create a person by itself. Therefore, at the locus of a person, both paternal and maternal kin are conducive to the configuration of a person through the union of this married couple.

Many other similar and spontaneous comments were made to me when Rukai parents came to the issues of children's physical characteristics, talents, and bodily dispositions connecting back to their kin from both sides. The transitive verb 'take' (*malra*) is an expression of 'taking after' from the position of a descendant, and originally describes the act of taking hold of something tangible like grabbing vegetables from gardens. Again, the resemblance in both physicality and personality are thought to have their origins in their kin from both sides of both parents. That is, the inheritance of personalities appears to them as that a child inherits or collects

something tangible and concrete from their kin and concentrates it in an individual person. A person is imagined as a site of the objectification of personal qualities and dispositions of ancestors of multiple origins.

Notably, the origins of a person are made most clear in naming practices. First of all, names given to siblings are thought to come from their grandparents on either side. Secondly, when naming a baby, the compatibility and similarity in both appearance and qualities between the previous namesake and the baby are much emphasised. This compatibility could be known from its physical condition after being named. If a named baby gets ill or sick too frequently, its parents and grandparent would consider that the biography of the name cannot be enmeshed with the baby, and that to change the name, or more precisely, to provide a new biography, is the solution. This shares a striking resemblance with the Buginese-Makassarese of Indonesia (Errington 1989: 58-60, 192-3).

Thirdly, the Rukai consider the namesakes to share similar personalities and biographies, and the newly-appointed name bearers are thus seen as the continuation of the forbears instead of their parents in the sense that the shared biographies between namesakes across generations are widely acknowledged and strongly held amongst the Rukai. In this sense, personal names not only reveal that 'individual lives thus become entangled—through the name—in the life histories of others' (Bodenhorn & Vom Bruck 2006: 3), but also imply that a living namesake relives the biography of the previous ones. A person with a proper personal name is enacting the past of all his/her preceding namesakes.

More significantly, the production of a baby implies the reproduction of ancestors in that forbears' names demand descendants to inherit them because, as Rukai elders put it, 'names must not lie on the ground'. The expression 'lying on the ground' is a euphemism for death, and by this logic, names, imagined as a living sign which crystallises the biographies of name bearers throughout history, have a compulsion to be relived again in the namesakes to come. In other words, that a Rukai person is imagined as a locus of relatedness is based on both the recognition of the equal contribution of parents and the acknowledgement that namesakes in the present relive and also re-enact the biographies of ancestors in the past. This explains why aged parents often urge their married children to have more babies to 'inherit' the names of ancestors or their still living siblings. Likewise, several married women mentioned that their parents gave this as the reason for them to have babies, or had their in-laws adopt their babies in order to pass down the names of ancestors.

On the other hand, Rukai naming practices imply eternal tension between the predominance of the past biography of a name and the desire of a living namesake to



transcend the pre-destined fate. For instance, Adraliyw, a male personal name from one noble house, is a name of paramount potency because, as is recollected, he bravely killed some invading Dutch soldiers and took their heads as the trophy in a confrontation which was not recorded in the dossiers of the Dutch East India Company. His bravery and prowess are bound up with the biographies of all the namesakes ever since. However, all the namesakes are thought to share his short-lived journey of life due to the view that every man involved in the practice of headhunting in pre-colonial times would compensate for the loss of life of his antagonists with the price of his own life, such as by having a sudden death.

On the occasion of the mourning for the death of Adraliyw of one leading noble house in 2004, for example, I met another peer namesake of the deceased Adraliyw and he told me that his senior kin were extremely worried about his life expectancy for the reason that they did not think he would beat the odds to enjoy his life of being an elder with grandchildren. Then he mentioned an episode between him and the deceased concerning the predestination of one's life. This still living Adraliyw had had drinks with the late Adraliyw several years previously. The still living one said that the late Adraliyw might be the only one of their namesakes who could reach his fiftieth birthday, which would also be a sort of achievement, for the reason that the late Adraliyw, who had occupied the position of the official head of the village for seven years, seemed to possess greater potency and to be more talented than his previous namesakes to challenge the fate pre-destined in the biographies of his, or their common, name. Then they made a toast to encourage both of them to beat the poor odds. The still living Adraliyw concluded that some other namesake to come would succeed in this 'mission'. Owing to the death of late Adraliyw, he continued, his kin decided to rename him in order to give him a different biography than that of Adraliyw, and he had been *another person* ever since.

Fourthly, amongst grandchildren, the origins of their names are never unitary; that is, names given to a sibling set in a house come from the grandparents of both sides. For instance, in a group of four siblings, Tanwbake was named after his paternal grandfather's brother, whilst his sister Moni was given the name of their maternal grandfather's sister. Tanwbak's younger brother Segesege takes his name from their maternal grandmother's brother, whilst his elder sister A'eles acquired her name from their maternal grandfather's sister. It seems that all of the siblings are different in terms of the origins of names, but in effect the naming practice of a sibling set manifests the realisation of both-sidedness of making relatedness in a single house. In this regard, the emphasis on the multiple origins of ancestors—paternal and maternal—embodied in grandchildren's identities expresses



how the birth of and social making of grandchildren are made only with reference to the recognition of a similar contribution from both the paternal and maternal sides.

The only taboo of naming practices is that the names of the siblings of grandparents are not allowed to name the siblings of grandchildren. This practice invokes an image that siblingship cannot be reproduced in the alternate generation within a house, which is heavily emphasised by Rukai elders. Finally, only children born from extra-marital relations are not given names from ancestors. Children without names from ancestors are deemed to have no place amongst the existing name-bearers in the generation of grandparents. Put differently, they are not designated as having an origin insofar as the namesakes share biographies and personalities indicative of the origin of a person. The method used to 'assign' children without names with an origin is adoption, which often occurs in Taromak, the practice of which in this case is also seen as the enactment of kinship morality.

### Sharing domestic chores amongst pre-pubescent children

In Taromak, the practice of doing domestic chores is an indispensable part of children's daily lives. Many elders and middle-aged people mentioned that when they were young, they usually followed their parents to do garden work in the mountain terraces (*moam'oa*, part of the native category of the field/garden, *angangada*), and that they had fun in work as well as playing with other children. That children are thought to do domestic chores lies in the fact that they should 'give help' (*wask'aelr'e*) to house members. What is more, prepubescent children are viewed as ungendered in contrast to both adolescents and adults.<sup>3</sup> Amongst siblings, the distinction of gender difference is less marked than that of age difference. For instance, the term of address, the same as that of reference, only identifies *taka*, elder sibling, and *aki*, younger sibling. By the same token, the term for the sibling's spouse, *sakata*, is also ungendered. An interesting counterpart is that the friends of people in both adolescence and adulthood are clearly gender marked: the term for a female friend is *arli*, and the male one is *talrak'i*.

This implies that siblings in a house are differentiated in terms of seniority instead of gender, and similarly the division of domestic chores is based on age difference, for instance, it is elder brothers instead of younger sisters who are required to prepare breakfast, and at the same time all siblings share equally the duty

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<sup>3</sup> In the ungenderedness of personhood with respect to children as well as ungendered relations from the viewpoint of grandparents, the Rukai have much in common with the Vezo (Astuti 1993).

of doing housework.

For instance, Tina La'ai (*tina* is the term of reference for ego's mother and all women of her generation), who is in her late sixties, recollects that when her elder brother went to the men's house, it was her turn to do most household chores because her siblings were too young for them. She had to wake up very early in the morning, and pound millet to cook for breakfast; she could have fun with other siblings or friends after the adults went to work in the field. On hearing the bird's singing *talikao* in the afternoon (by that sound the Rukai can tell the coming of dusk), she had to run back to her house at full speed to make a fire in the hearth because:

The elders dislike a cool hearth. We might have fun with friends outside the house and we usually put out the fire in the hearth secretly for a while. But we had to reheat it before they reached home. Some kids were too young to cook, yet boiling some water in a pot would count. Never leave a house with a cool hearth. Elders definitely scolded kids furiously for a cool hearth.

According to Rukai mortuary practices, which are still observed nowadays, only a bereaved house has a hearth without fire, and during the mourning period all food for both the bereaved and kin who keep vigil is cooked on a temporary hearth outside the bereaved house. A hearth without heat amounts to a house without life, sharing some similarities with Malay houses in Langkawi (Carsten 1997). Seen from this perspective, children not only do domestic work, but also they have to keep an eye on the hearth in order to keep the heat of a hearth. Thus, what children do for a house is far from being trivial, for they are also responsible for maintaining the life of a house.

Even though nowadays gas hobs have become common in modern Rukai houses, children still need to do house chores after school. Very often they are sent on errands by their adults to buy groceries, or to bring vegetables or food to the houses of their kin. Hence, the movements of children back and forth amongst houses further manifest the connectedness of houses in children's practices of doing domestic chores, in common with what Malay children mean to the making of relatedness (Carsten 1991, 1997). In this sense, children's practices of doing housework contribute to the making of inter-house connectedness.

## Adolescents' Work Practices: the Creation of Gendered Persons

With the approaching of puberty, gender difference amongst adolescents is more accentuated by their parents and grandparents. Regardless of sex, they often shared with me their worries about their grandchildren's reluctance to participate in the initiation or exchange of work. 'She cannot turn into a woman if she does not do it [*maisah'olro*, the collective work exchange as described below]', said a middle-aged Rukai mother, 'But she refused to go and prefers to stay with her female pals'. Given the prevalence of secondary education, some adolescents show little interest in participating in these activities, although most of them would not refuse to do them if required by their parents or grandparents.

In Taromak, gender difference is made clear by way of learning how to conduct work practices with same-sex persons in collectivity. I first delineate some practices dating up to the fire in 1969, and then return to the contemporary situation. This is less about the evolution or transition of practice than about how the Rukai sense the passing of time through the comparison of current practices with those in the past. Whenever villagers and I were doing similar things, they often spontaneously recalled—I did not even ask any questions—how similar practices were done when they were young. It seems to me that the present cannot make sense without reference to the past in Taromak.

Before the mid-1960s, girls and boys who reached puberty were required to learn how to do garden work and house chores in the men's house. Boys were sent to the men's house (*alako*) to receive a two-year training there. If some of them showed any reluctance to go, young men from the men's house would go directly into their house and seize them without their parents' permission. When sent into the men's house, uninitiated boys or neophytes, aged from eleven to thirteen, were responsible for all kinds of chores, including fetching water from the river, chopping sticks from trees in the mountains, cooking meals for senior young men, doing the sweeping, and the cleaning up in the men's house. All of these were called the '(domestic) chores' (*tomatoma*, sig. *toma*) of the men's house.

Residents in Taromak up until the present day call the men's house 'a real house for (unmarried) men' because 'there was no place in his own house for him to sleep. His bed was in the men's house' (see Plates 2.1 & 2.2). At that time, all uninitiated boys had to stay in the men's house for two years (the training lasted for three years in the pre-colonial period), and were not allowed to return to their houses. With their marriage, they began to lead their lives inside houses with their parents and wives.



Plate 2.1 Men's house



Plate 2.2 Gathering of young boys in the yard of the men's house



Both with the destruction of the men's house in the fire of 1969 and with the government's inexorable measures to oblige children to go to school—the disobedient would be fined—young men nowadays only receive one month of training for their initiation in July. At present, male adolescents spend their daily time either at home or at school, and are allowed to sleep at home during the period of initiation. Many parents do not take their children to acquire the status of marriageability at school, as is shown by their attitude of urging them to take part in the initiation, though they often use the grades at school to distinguish the relative seniority amongst children.

Notably, an important part of the training for initiation is that male adolescents are required to increase their bravery by going into the wilderness at night, and indeed the exhibition of bravery is associated with the construct of maleness in terms of potency. A man who is powerful/strong enough to keep danger at bay will be a man of power to protect his wife and children after marriage, on which I elaborate below and then again in Chapter 8.

Before the practice of collective labour exchange came to a stop in 1965 due to the fact that fewer people produced millet, adolescent girls who were coming of age were recruited at the house of the leader to participate in the *maisah'olro*, the collective exchange of labour, during spring. The leader was a married woman, with less housework to do because her children were grown up, and who had a house with enough space for girls to stay during the period of work exchange, which usually took one month. In addition to young girls, married women who had some work of weeding in their millet or rice fields were welcome to join them. On the basis of rotation, every participant would weed all the others' gardens. More significantly, the collective labour exchange was said to instruct young girls in how to do garden work (see Plate 2.3). With the experience of collective work exchange, girls were deemed to have become marriageable, since elders stressed that the brides should know how to do garden work as well as housework. At present, the Rukai have resumed the practice of collective labour exchange since they felt that ancestors would be forgotten if the living people did not carry on those past practices. In addition, many parents still maintain the importance of taking part in labour exchange along with companions of the same sex, rather than growing up at school. This enables their daughters to become 'young ladies' (*mwa kabalwbalwa*), which means that a young lady is ready for courtship and marriage. Taken together, learning how to conduct the practices of work makes both girls and boys acquire the status of marriageability, and consequently the establishment and reproduction of houses are actualised by means of the union of spouses as discussed below.



Plate 2.3 An elderly lady instructing young girls how to weed  
in the practice of *maisah'olro*

Strikingly, courtship is only allowed in the collectivity instead of individually. Implicitly, it is morally approved that only married couples are allowed to participate in communal occasions such as weddings or funerals in each other's company; if unmarried ones try to do the same, villagers come out with harsh comments like 'They are not spouses yet. How can they dare to show up like they are a couple?' Before marriage, even an engaged couple is not allowed to date without their respective companions around, which is quite similar to the Karo Batak of North Sumatra, Indonesia (Kipp 1986). It implies that for the Rukai dating is never an individual act; only a married couple can form the union of a single man and a single woman, and appears in front of others in the image of physical togetherness. By keeping these two groups of young people apart, the collectivity of femaleness and that of maleness are actualised. Given partaking of genderedness in the collectivity, adolescents who acquire femaleness or maleness are accordingly eligible for courtship and marriage.

Above all, gender difference is intensified by the thought that people are required to follow their gendered routes in life. Rukai elders deployed the image of *lrolrodra*, a physical path on the landscape on which a person walks everyday, to indicate the ideal practices which a person should adopt in his or her life. This notion of path is similar to the point made by Catherine Allerton (2004), who calls attention to the experiential aspect of the notion 'path' in the context of eastern Indonesia; for the Rukai, I would suggest that the imagery of path is bound up with the ongoing practices of persons in their life time.

In Taromak, a woman has her path to walk: she must learn how to behave properly; she must keep her virginity before marriage; she must always shows fidelity towards her husband. Likewise, a man's path starts with his maleness: he is more powerful and stronger than a woman; he is responsible for feeding a house and its members; and he is allowed, implicitly though, to be unfaithful to his wife once in while—in some cases I knew of, these men usually went with widows or with women of other villages.<sup>4</sup> If a woman conducts extra-marital affairs as a man does, for instance, then elders scold her because 'she walked the wrong path. She walked a man's'. As I knew privately, several Rukai women had experiences of extra-marital relationships, and they were certainly criticised by those who did not.<sup>5</sup> The shared

<sup>4</sup> In the past, the maleness of a man was closely associated with bravery and hunting skill, but the Law of Hunting set a ban on hunting since 1948 onwards, and later in 2000, the Law of National Parks regulates that the practice of hunting, according to the custom of different indigenous peoples, is allowed only during the month of July, the time for the millet harvest. In addition, before the introduction of Christianity, a man, or the head of the house, needed to perform rites to maintain the wellbeing of the members of his house, which is elaborated further in Chapter 7.

<sup>5</sup> Let me give an example concerning how women with extra-marital relationships were punished

view that women should maintain fidelity also indicates that gender differences and their construction are never free of the making of the ideology of male dominance in the community. The transgression of gendered routes, though usually only in the case of women, incurs unease and reproach in day-to-day conversation instead of public condemnation or punishment. However, it should be borne in mind that in the Rukai context, gender difference with respect to the division of labour is in effect bound up with their notions of potency and power, as I discuss in the pages to follow and in Chapter 8.

From the above, gender difference amongst the Rukai is marked and clearly known to others only through their practices, as in many Austronesian-speaking peoples in Southeast Asia (Errington 1989). More specifically, it is the collective participation in particular gendered practices in relation to work that create the participants' gendered persons on the way to marriage. Therefore, I would suggest that the making of gendered persons, given that it takes both maleness and femaleness to form a marital union, is premised on the fact that it is precisely the participation in the collectivity of same-sex people instead of sexed individuals that enables all participants to partake of the creation of maleness and femaleness. At the same time, the demonstration of maleness or femaleness in the site of individual persons is created and secured by virtue of avoiding the gathering of two cross-sex individuals, which indeed stands for the image of a married couple.

### **The Ungendered Labour of a Married Couple**

For Rukai parents and grandparents, an ideal child's spouse is formed with reference to both genealogical relatedness and personal industriousness. The first is about marriageability in terms of producing healthy babies by avoiding incest, and the second speaks of industriousness as a quality concerning the ability to look after house members.

There is a preference for marrying someone who is close, as Rukai people put it, 'to create relatives by marrying kin' (*mawawa ta maletetes mwa ta'an*). The kind of marriage arrangement which creates closeness is that of *mwa silryolri*, roughly

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before the 1960s, that is, prior to the introduction of Christianity. As told to me, when a woman was found to be unfaithful to her husband, she would be brought to the men's house for interrogation. When she admitted it, the punishment (*asabon*), only in form of payment of foodstuffs, was that her family made millet dumplings and prepared some alcohol as compensation for damaging the fame of her husband's family. If the man having the relationship with her remained single, he would not receive any punishment; if married, his family was required to prepare alcohol for her husband's family as the payment of punishment.



translated as '[both marriage partners] returning backward [while marrying out]'. Though marriage means giving away members of a house and thus creating distance, as I was told, *mwa silryolri* marriage means to draw kin from far away closer to a house. However, it is emphasised that the candidate should not come from houses built by the siblings of one's parents; the preferred category of kin is that of second cousins. Otherwise, given the Hawaiian terminology in Taromak which stresses the salience of generational difference amongst kin, this couple-to-be who are first cousins to each other would be thought of as a union of siblings. Rukai elders seriously warn their children that such a union, according to the myth of origin, is doomed to produce a baby with bodily deficiencies such as blindness, deafness or lack of limbs.

Indeed, as Shelly Errington (1987, 1989) and Janet Carsten (1997) note, siblingship in Southeast Asia is critical to the understanding of what marriage, spouses and houses mean in a local context. This is the case for the Rukai. In Taromak, a couple in courtship usually call each other 'elder sibling' (*taka*) and 'younger sibling' (*aki*) instead of personal names (e.g., Kipp 1986). Thus, in order not to cause 'incest', the Rukai put emphasis on the appropriate distance between partners-to-be in terms of genealogical distance, for inappropriate marriage appears 'a status mistake' (Errington 1989: 232); meanwhile, a house of incestuous siblings—full siblings and first cousins—is but the failure of domestic reproduction.

Next, the candidate for a possible marriage partner should exhibit industriousness in work. Before the mid 1970s and again during my fieldwork, collective work exchange (*maisah'olro*) and its related activities are said to be the proper occasion for all parents to visually assess these adolescent girls. In particular, at the end of a day's work, young girls will carry a piece of firewood as a return gift for the 'beloved one' (*sisilanga*, which is an ungendered term) of one participant girl, because his parents have usually sent some drinks and food, or *lawlri*, to all the young girls. The girls then form a line to set off on a slow-paced jogging-like parade (*giyag'ilre*) on the streets of the village (see Plate 2.4). On hearing the sound of small waist bells (*gamilr'in*) from the girls, people will gather on the street to enjoy the event, and to comment and to judge, for example, looking at the shape of their calves, an indicator of who is industrious or sluggish in garden work. Afterwards, parents or grandparents will encourage their boys to court the girls with the (presumed) diligence.

When one of my male foster kin mentioned this meaning of the parade, I at first thought that he was kidding me because he commented jokingly, 'it [the jogging occasion] is like a beauty contest'. However, many other people later on also stressed



Plate 2.4 *Giyag'ilre* in April 2005

the importance of industriousness (*malrahemete*) and scolded some women for their laziness in garden work and domestic chores. More strikingly, evidence for such industriousness or laziness for work is inscribed on human bodies: the calves should develop strong muscles, which mean that the girl has often done garden work; or, a woman with industriousness will keep fit and never grow fat; and even, an overweight woman is condemned for her laziness in work.

The requisite of industriousness also applies to young men, though Rukai parents often accentuated the point that men should bring home the fruit of their labour. One practice to demonstrate men's industriousness is the provision of 'bride service' (*h'ep'elre*). During courtship, a male adolescent ought to conduct bride service for the girl's house with the help of his companions (*h'apalre*) of the men's house, and the content of bride service includes both housework and garden work. At present, though some paid workers from the village are hired to do tasks which in the past were part of bride service like mending the roof, the current practice of bride service is centred on providing service for the kin of the girl, for instance, escorting female kin back home and doing heavy housework such as helping with bringing garden produce home.

After the Rukai started to do wage labour about from the late 1950s onwards, the criterion became whether or not a man had a job with a regular salary, which was also taken to be equal to a man's expression of industriousness. For instance, Tina Milasawa wanted to introduce to her sister-in-law a young man who was diligent in work yet was not considered to be handsome. However, her sister-in-law turned this man down as a marriage partner owing to his ordinary appearance. On hearing this, Tina Milasawa warned her sister-in-law, 'The most important thing is that a husband brings money back home regularly. What good does a man's pretty face do?'

After marriage, the husband and the wife are thought to conduct garden work together, even if the husband goes to find a job in another town. In the gardens, as described already, the division of labour is based on physical strength instead of gender. A man is thought to be more stronger/powerful (*makec'eng*) than a woman so he is responsible for chopping weeds, cleaning fields, ploughing land with hoes, and pulling all weed or stalks onto the edge of the fields, whereas the woman uses small sickles (*hah'ao*) to weed the fields and reap grains. This couple can alternate tasks to let their partners have a break from hard labour. In reply to my question about the division of labour, some elders just laughed and replied that there were no so-called 'women's tasks', or 'men's tasks' in the gardens, because 'if tasks are neatly divided, then the jobs won't get done when either is absent'. The garden produce that a couple carries back home is taken to be from their collaborative efforts instead of

distinguishing whose contribution is greater than the other. Unlike the case in Melanesia where a Hagen woman can claim the crops as her produce on the land of her husband's clan (Strathern 1988: 164-5), neither part of a Rukai couple can claim the produce of their garden work as the fruit of a single person's labour with relation to others in some social contexts. Rather, it is their joint efforts that are socially recognised and morally approved of.

What is more, either spouse is entitled to take over the tasks for the absent other. However, during my fieldwork, women were more often seen in the fields looking after rice or millet while their husbands were out of the village on shift work, but they never call growing rice or millet 'women's tasks'. Thus it is the union of a married couple that provides the fruit of their collective efforts, and that is viable for the reproduction of members of their house.

Nevertheless, when more and more Rukai men started to do wage labour from the 1950s, the dissociation of men from garden work to a certain extent could be concomitant to the fact that women had to organise garden work with the help of kin or new technology like tractors, while they and their children remained in full charge of domestic chores. It is instructive to consider the Malays of Langkawi as a parallel case for comparison. Amongst the Malays, rice cultivation demands the collaboration of men and women in a house, whereas in another context men do fishing whilst women dominate household labour. On the one hand, the collaboration of women and men in rice growing presents the image of a house as a couple; on the other hand, within the divide of market economy (fishing) and subsistence economy, it turns out that women are intimately associated with the house while men dominate fishing (Carsten 1997).

Moreover, similar to the Wana of Indonesia (Atkinson 1990) and the Buid of the Philippines (Gibson 1985), Rukai division of labour does not perfectly correspond with gender difference, and it cannot make sense until we take into consideration how the gender constructs are bound up with their notions of power and potency. I is the collaboration, I suggest, rather than differentiation, of a man and a woman in garden work that is vital to domestic reproduction. Nevertheless, it is noted that the dissociation of men from the domestic economy comes into existence in specific social and economic circumstances, that is, men's engagement in wage labour, and how the fruits of wage labour become the symbolism for domestic reproduction will be analysed in the chapter to follow. However, insofar as a couple is seen as a whole in garden work, I would suggest that this ungendered whole embodied in garden produce possesses the capacity of fertility to nurture members of their houses.





## Elders' Work in the Company of Kin

At the first meal of my doctoral fieldwork in July 2003, my foster mother suggested that I could tutor Rukai children in the evening in order to earn my own living expenses. Some elders showed their concern as to how I could survive without doing a real job. In my reply to their question about how long my fieldwork and the writing up would take altogether—at least four years—they were very shocked and said that it was impossible for them not to have a real job for such a long time as I did, especially knowing that I have a daughter. 'We have no child to raise, but you [the author] do', as a female Rukai elder told me. Here, the objective of work practices that are conducted for a house's sake falls upon a married couple with children rather than elders, for in Taromak only grandparents are entitled to be elders (*malrolrot'ang*).

Though grandparents become unburdened of providing the fruit of their labour for house members, doing garden work for them is more tied to their daily social interaction than any obligation. Indeed, they seldom expressed the view that they loved to stay at home all day long. Some grandmothers are given the task of caring for their young grandchildren as their own children stayed in other towns for work, and they loved to carry their grandchildren to the gardens. During my fieldwork, when I talked to elders—most of them are female—in front of their houses in the morning, they often mentioned that later on they would go to the fields. I always followed them there to continue our talks. For elders, doing garden work means labouring with companions or kin. I found that the tasks in the fields were accompanied by conversation with their kin whose fields were adjacent to theirs. Few of them—usually their spouses had other waged work to do—performed the tasks alone in the fields.

The elders' concern with their housework and garden work appears more conspicuous in their implicit blurring of time for work and time for a break, for example, public holidays or polling days. On the polling day in December 2004, for instance, some middle-aged mothers and elderly women chatted with me in front of the polling station for a short while, and then told me they would go to the fields or return to complete housework. Their plans stand in a sharp contrast to those—campaigning assistants, homecoming workers and their friends—who were having drinks and betel nuts in front of houses and joking and laughing as if it were a festive occasion. Likewise, some middle-aged people or elders would go to the church in the morning, and then to the fields after lunch and a midday nap. For them,

whether cash crops or not, growing grain seems to determine their rhythm of life, and the time for garden work is actually followed by the completion of one day's housework.

Let me draw on the case of the Baining of Melanesia (Fajans 1997) to illuminate the significance of work practices to elders. Unlike the Baining elders who stay at home instead of doing garden work, since ageing implies a return to infancy expressed as the demanding of food from adults, in Taromak becoming elderly through gaining grandchildren means more than being unburdened of rearing children. Indeed, in addition to possessing authority in the house with regard to familial affairs, from house renovation to which brand of television to buy, Rukai elders achieve progressively the ideal of what being a person means, that is, to have established a house with married adult children and grandchildren. Such an achievement is also said to be one's happiness. Many elders love to celebrate their birthday with many of their kin and siblings coming to enjoy a festive-like event. However, the increase of happiness through celebrating birthdays year after year paradoxically implies that one is approaching death. As Tama Morawoce (*tama* is the term of reference for ego's father and all men of his generation), the current headman, said, 'once one's happiness reaches the summit, it is the time to return to the "heavenly homeland" (*swbwlwbelr'eng*) to join our ancestors'.

No one could explain what the summit of one's happiness looks like. From my observation, happiness for elders means having a good time with grandchildren, for many elders loved to take their grandchildren to the church and even to the village meeting. Some would even say that they felt their happiness taken away when their adult children came to take the grandchildren away to live in another town.

Many Rukai elders also do some garden work like growing rice, maize, sweet potatoes or greens, or piece-rate work like handpicking roselle. Similar to the Baining elders who perceive their work as pretence instead of work for real (Fajans 1997: 100), Rukai elders often said, 'We are not doing garden work. We are having fun (*kivavang*)'. Besides, to work for oneself amongst the Baining means the assertion of one's selfhood, but in Taromak, doing garden work is tantamount to working with one's kin, siblings or companions, in the course of which they spend time on exchanging words, jokes and betel nuts. As we see in Chapter 5, doing garden work brings forth conviviality which means having a good time in the company of others, thereby contributing to the making of domestic sociality in the Rukai context.

Moreover, in comparison with the role of a married couple as food producers, the grandparents' garden produce belongs to what is thought to be excess food in a

house, and very often it is to 'give to share' (*b'ay*) with kin. In this regard, the way to dispose of grandparents' garden produce shows the significance of their work practices in making and reproducing kin relatedness between houses. On the other hand, it further reinforces the role of parents in a house as food producers who are chiefly responsible for domestic reproduction.

Finally, Rukai elders are not forced to retire into staying at home, nor are they freed from producing food for children due to the loss of work skills or bodily substances (e.g., in the Baining case, it refers to blood), nor do they take ageing to mean retirement from garden work as the Baining elders do (Fajans 1997). Conversely, Rukai elders enjoy their happiness by means of being unburdened of child-rearing, gaining grandchildren, and doing garden work in the company of kin and companions.

### A Garden for the Deceased

One significant mortuary practice in Taromak particularly reveals how work practices matter for both the living and the deceased. On the third day of the burial, one male kinsperson of the bereaved house should go to the fields to conduct the practice of *taki asalisiya*, meaning 'to have (the deceased) worshipped'. In August 2004, after the burial of the late Tama Adraliyw, the younger brother of the current headman, I stayed at the bereaved house with their female kin. When I arrived, I was told that the current headman, Tama Morawce, had gone to the gardens alone very early in the morning to conduct the *taki asalisiya*; and all the female kin stayed to keep the bereaved people company. The practice of *taki asalisiya* is quite simple: the practitioner goes to the edge of the garden and then draws lines to make a miniature garden inside the real one. Then the practitioner uses an areca nut to communicate to the deceased with the message that a garden has been dedicated for him/her to work in the hope that the deceased will get fed in the afterworld. Following the practice of *taki asalisiya*, the bereaved members are allowed to recommence garden work, but have to avoid any activities other than garden work, especially paying a daily visit to the house of kin.<sup>6</sup> The constraints on their movements in terms of conducting daily social interactions with kin last for one month.<sup>7</sup> Whenever doing garden work, the

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<sup>6</sup> The only method to make the bereaved participate in social activities as such is triggered by the invitation of their kin for dinner at their houses. This is the practice of *a kivavnag*, meaning 'to make [the bereaved] play/have fun', and I will elaborate the social significance of this practice in Chapter 5.

<sup>7</sup> I was told that before the 1970s this practice lasted for even one year on the part of the spouse of the deceased.



living should keep in mind that the deceased are around, so that one must not say things which might offend ancestral spirits in the garden.

On the mortuary occasion of a foster kinsman of mine in February 2005, a male elder indicated that if the bereaved did not dedicate land to the deceased, then it was believed that the deceased would disturb the living at their doing of garden work. 'They [the deceased] would get hungry over there', my foster mother continued, 'and to give them a garden is to have them feed themselves. Besides, elders [*malrolrot'ang*, also referring to the deceased and ancestors] just love to have fun along with work!' The Rukai imagine life after death based on the logic of making a continuum between this world and beyond, insofar as the deceased is considered to have as much a liking for garden work—equal to play (*kivavang*)—as the living elders. Over time, however, it then becomes the descendants' duty to feed ancestral spirits by giving betel nuts, a tiny portion of food or alcohol. This is because the Rukai consider that the deceased want themselves to be remembered, rather than because they do not feel like working in the world beyond.

From the foregoing discussion, we find that work practices hinge upon the elders' visionary image of the world beyond life as if it were a continuation of their current situation, since they never stop work even after their married children take up the main duty to provide food. What is revealed in their imagination is that elders need to be self-sufficient in terms of doing garden work for themselves. Over time, the living are then thought, if not required, to feed the deceased. The practice of feeding ancestral spirits with food speaks of relations of nurturance between the living and the deceased. Indeed, the practice of feeding ancestors is premised on the remembrance of the living towards the deceased. The making of ancestry, indispensable to the making of a person, relies on not only practices of work for the sake of nurturance, but also the descendants' remembrance of them.

### Relatedness in Gifts and Work

The construction of a person as a node of multiple origins is made manifest at the moment of offering labour for weddings. On the occasion of wedding, most people would take on a unitary identity according to which path (*lrolrodra*) of relatedness—through maternal or paternal one—is relatively closer. However, in the case of the *mwa silryolre* marriage, those who are of a similar genealogical distance to both the bride and groom offer services of work to both sides, whereas others only perform labour for one side.



During the preparation for a wedding, most of the female kin came to the hosts' house to see how they could help. On the part of the bride, female kin prepared food and betel nuts for the occasion of negotiating the wedding payment and setting a date for the event of 'sending areca nuts' (*w sabiki*) to the bride's house, which is equal to the engagement (see Plate 2.5). On the day of negotiating marriage payments, kin from both sides were invited to the bride's house, while there was only one male elder from each side to be the representative to discuss and negotiate the content and amount of payment. All the items of marriage payment as a whole were said to be equal to what the bride's parents have invested in rearing their girl.

After consent was reached, the kin of both sides would share drinks and the food prepared by the bride's female kin. During the feast, I found that the kin from the same side tended to sit next to each other instead of sitting with those from the other side, and it seemed to maintain the separation of the bride's kin from the groom's, though minimal exchanges of etiquette and alcohol still occurred. Just like other cognatic groups in Southeast Asia, the Rukai case also shows 'a striking degree of avoidance between the principal parties' (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995: 38) at different stages of marriage in order to create the category of 'affines'.

On the eve of the wedding, there were more tasks to do, so usually more female kin came to offer help. Male kin were responsible for carrying drinks or alcohol and betel nuts to the hosts' house, for those tasks involved heavy weights. Female kin needed to prepare as many betel nuts with lime and betel stem as they could, and put them in plaited bamboo baskets for guests. Preparing betel nuts with them was never dull because there were many funny anecdotes and jokes all along the way. Some women might leave for home earlier because they had younger children to care for or cuddle to sleep, while later on other women finishing shift work would come over to chat and join in the preparations. Still other women helped by steaming rice to make dumplings. Till very early in the morning, the kitchen was full of women and the nice smell of steamed rice.

Besides, female kin also needed to prepare food for the bride's companions who came to keep her company before she married, which is called *twa lraw'elrang*. The content of *twa lraw'elrang* was mainly to sing and dance in a circle, for this was the last time for the bride and her same-sex companions to sing and dance in collectivity. After the wedding, the bride would pair with her husband as a united couple, and she was supposed to spend more time with her husband instead of her girl companions. Meanwhile, many of the male kin would send their gifts to the house. Most of the gifts were alcohol and soft drinks, and the hosts would note down records of the content of the gifts from each of their kin, which was for the hosts to know how to



Plate 2.5 A group of kinspersons 'sending areca nuts' to the girl's house

prepare a return gift to the houses of their kin in the future.

On the morning of the wedding day, these female kin gathered at the hosts' house to make piles of rice dumplings. Some more drinks or alcohol would be brought in by male kinspersons this morning. It is widely thought that the hosts' house should show generosity (*mathiathinalre*) and hospitality (*mathaowawa*) by virtue of making the guests eat and drink to their heart's content.

On the part of the groom, his female kin would help with making headdresses (*bengelray*, meaning 'a flower') with flowers and leaves, whether real or not, for the house members of the bride. These floral headdresses made up a part of the marriage payment, which usually included clothes with exquisite embroidery, glass bead necklaces and bracelets, several branches of areca nuts, and money. The number of floral headdresses from the groom's female kin was not an official part of the marriage payment negotiated in the pre-wedding meeting as noted. However, these floral headdresses were seen as gifts from the groom's female kin to the bride's kin, including the parents and grandparents of the bride.

On the occasion of weddings, the dual origin of a person is called upon in the provision of help with house chores. For instance, if one house has similar closeness to both houses of the bride and groom, which is in the *mwa silryolre* marriage, members (usually women) of this house are supposed to help with work at the houses of both the bride and groom. I witnessed that Tina Siselaga, whose maternal niece married her paternal grandson, was busy in conducting different tasks at both the bride's and groom's houses.<sup>8</sup> Then, as kin of the groom's house, she had to take out some money to prepare a pig with other kin to send to the bride's house. Then, on the second day of wedding, as kin of the bride's house, she received one share of the pork (*amalri*) prepared by her and others of the groom's kin. This portion of pork was said to be a gift in return for her provision of labour for the wedding, and the share of pork was called the 'deserved share (*tro'ole*)', and much the same is for dividing the gifts on the occasion of 'sending areca nuts' (see Plate 2.6). By the logic of the dual origins of a person as well as relatedness, those houses having a similar closeness with both the bride's parents were therefore entitled to receive two shares of the gifts prepared by the kin of the groom: areca nuts at the engagement and pork at marriage; yet they only offered as much work/labour as any other kinspersons did.

In short, whether one should offer labour for the wedding occasion for the bride or the groom or both is dependent upon the closeness to them, and in many cases the

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<sup>8</sup> For the Rukai, it is common for people of different generations to marry each other. They are classificatory parent and child but not as close as the members of the house. However, it leads to the kin adopting different terms of address according to their relative generations.



Plate 2.6 Giving kin their 'deserved share' of food (areca nuts and betel pepper stem)  
on the occasion of 'sending areca nuts'



Rukai identify with only one side of the newlyweds. More prominently, the case of *mwa silryolre* marriage strikingly shows that a person with similar closeness to the host house is thought to take on a dual identity relating to both parties at marriage, that is, this person is simultaneously the category of kin (*maletetese*) and that of affines (*mwa ta'an*) with reference to one's positionality to the houses of marriage partners. This is an ideal image of endogamy in Taromak: to conduct a marital union with the descendants of out-marrying members enacts the thought that kin should lead a shared life in the same (imaginary) house. In addition, in the *mwa silryolre* marriage and the cases where similar closeness to both sides of the bride's house can be recognised, the dual origins of a person are called upon with regard to the provision of work/labour and assistance, as well as the division of gift. This is precisely because marriage implies the union of maleness and femaleness, which is realised in kinspersons' practices of work and dividing gifts.

## Conclusion

In Taromak, the notions of personhood are embedded in practices of work as well as the making of relatedness. First of all, the making of a baby is seen as the product of a married couple's collaborative labour, and produced only by a couple's mutual compatibility and affection towards each other. Namely, the making of a person requires both work and affection, in contrast to Baining notions of personhood entirely embedded in work (Fajans 1997). Through naming practices, the origin of a person is always both-sided in so far as one's talent, ability, and bodily dispositions are thought to be associated with both paternal and maternal kin. More significantly, the biography of the previous namesake is thought to be relived by the living namesake. This makes an individual person a locus of relatedness, and the making of a baby is the enactment of reproducing ancestors/grandparents rather than parents.

Given that a person is initially imagined as the embodiment of ungendered, collaborative efforts of a couple, gender difference is not made apparent until pubescence. For pre-pubescent children, gender difference is downplayed or even unrecognised insofar as the division when sharing domestic chores amongst siblings is drawn along seniority rather than gender. In adolescence, by contrast, work in the collectivity of same-sex people comes to create individual participants as gendered persons eligible for courtship and then marriage. Marriageability is associated with the quality of industriousness. Prominently, a gendered person's diligence in work,

the indicator of an ideal marriage partner, is concretised in either a woman's body or in a man's conduct of work as well as the provision of the fruit of their labour, food or money.

In contrast to a married couple whose work is seen as their assumed responsibility, elders show their liking for garden work in the company of others and, in turn work becomes synonymous with play. Moreover, as a consequence of the continuum between this world and that after death, the deceased not only are offered a miniature garden to work on, but also demand nurturance from the living to demonstrate descendants' remembrance of the deceased.

At another level, the both-sidedness of a person's origin is recognised in both the division of gifts and labour for weddings. Those who share similar closeness to both a bride and a groom need to perform the duty of kin to both of them (labour and preparing gifts). In the same vein, they are entitled to take two shares of gifts in a case where they have a similar closeness with both of a bride's parents. In other words, when it comes to both offering work/labour and taking shares of a gift at wedding, the both-sidedness of the origin of a person is evoked and then made evident.

From the above analysis, two questions remain: the first is what Rukai people think of work practices, and the second is about the meanings of work practices as well as their significance in relation to the making of domesticity in a local context. In order to answer these questions, I will turn to the investigation of what 'work' means for the Rukai in the chapter to follow.

## Chapter 3

### Work Practice and Human Efforts

In the last chapter, I analysed how Rukai notions of personhood are embedded in both work practices and relatedness, and this leads to enquiry into both the meanings of 'work' and the relations between work practices and relatedness, both of which I aim to demonstrate in this chapter.

In order to make clear what work means in a local context, at the outset I examine what activities the act of 'doing or making' comprise, as exemplified in the works of Jean Comaroff (1985), John and Jean Comaroff (1987) and Jean Fajans (1997). These authors share a constitutive perspective on work insofar as a wide range of activities is seen as 'work', and also their counterparts: play and ritual. Using this perspective allows me to distinguish the agencies ascribed to different human activities, as well as different aspects of personhood, in relation to work and its counterparts.

In contrast to Rukai people's emphasis on the contribution of doing garden work and wage labour (*twa lavai*) to domestic reproduction, doing domestic work (*twa toma*) seems to be unmarked and accordingly its significance draws less attention. I was very much struck by the fact that Rukai women themselves do not see their performance of work inside houses, such as doing embroidery for sale, as a practice equivalent to that of garden work or wage labour in terms of its importance in domestic reproduction. This then leads me to explore why domestic work, mainly carried out by women and children, is often taken for granted by the villagers.

I then move to discuss how the idioms of emotion such as love and care are constitutive both of daily economic practices and of relatedness by examining the growing of millet in contemporary Taronak. Compared to the cultivation of rice, introduced in the colonial era, which is a daily labour taken to actualise parents' duty of care, growing millet is rather endowed with the expression of maternal love towards children in the Rukai context. Interestingly, a father tends to carry out his duty of care through the provision of money obtained from waged work. More prominently, given the intimate association of millet with domestic sustenance, prolonging time through slowing down the work pace in the harvest is held to multiply its produce.

Finally, I indicate that the significance of work as maintaining the lives of members of a house is negated by the occurrence of death, and at this critical moment, the provision of domestic work from female kin to the bereaved house and all villagers finds its social recognition as having the capacity of securing both the house of mourning and community.

## Work: Of Spatiality and Human Agency

The meanings of work amongst the Rukai cannot exclude consideration of the locality where human activities are performed, on the grounds that the distinction of work practices, to a great extent, corresponds to the native classification of spaces. In particular, in many cases, the name for certain social spaces, like the village or the place occupied by outsiders, refers to both the locality and inhabitants, not to mention that one's identity in a village is made by reference to the house one lives in currently, as we I discuss in the next chapter. In this regard, the project of examining what 'work' refers to in the Rukai context amounts to illustrating how human activities correlate with social spaces.

In Taromak, living space is classified into the following categories: the village (*cegelre*) which consists of houses (*ta'an*) with inhabitants. Next, the gardens (*angangada*) include the mountain terraces (*moamo'a*) and paddy fields (*ca'ang*), the latter of which was created under Japanese colonialism from 1926. Then, there are a mountain area for hunting (*t'alro*), the river (*drakeralre*), the graveyard (*talrekeleeke*) which was also created by the Japanese, the place occupied by the outsiders (*bazabaza*), and the heavenly homeland (*swbwlwbelr'eng*) for the deceased.

If we move to look at the kinds of activities performed in the above categories of social space, then a general picture could be presented as below. The practice of work, or the act of doing or making (*twa*), is chiefly carried out in the village, the gardens and the river (e.g., catching fish), while ritual performance (*asa lisi*) takes place in the village, the gardens, and the hunting area. Seen from this perspective, the great majority of social activities (work and rites) in Rukai daily life—except hunting—fall into two main categories of social space: the gardens and the village, the latter of which refers to only the place people (*'omas*) inhabit. The intimate association between human activities and social spaces implies that the spatial dimension is inseparable from human activities. This in a way accords with, as I discuss in Chapter 4, the fact that the social existence of a person in Taromak always makes sense by reference to the house that one inhabits currently. That is, my



investigation of Rukai construct of work in effect directs our attention to how personhood, kinds of human activity, and spatiality are drawn to orchestrate with each other.

### *Work and ritual*

In Taromak, the content of the practice of work, the activities of doing or making, is divided along this line of spatial distinction. In the village, activities of cooking, caring for children, sweeping, tidying up, doing embroidery, and making clothes are termed 'domestic chores' (*tomatoma*, sg. *toma*) or 'housework'. Even similar tasks of cleaning and sweeping in the men's house are seen as a kind of housework. By contrast, in the gardens, activities of farming rice or millet such as seeding, weeding, and harvesting are 'garden work' (*lavai*). What, then, does work mean?

First of all, the act of doing or making is used for the creation of material items such as building a house (*twa ta'an*), making food like dumplings (*twa abay*) or sculpting a figurine (*twa omaomasena*; 'omaomasena, the wooden figurine in a human image). Secondly, as in the case of the Tswana (J.L. Comaroff & J. Comaroff 1987), the act of doing or making means 'causing to happen' (1987: 196) or to appear. For instance, the term *twa eray* (*eray*, blood) means 'to bleed'. In addition, the act of doing or making is bound up with the creation of persons. One implication of work as a creative activity is linked to the production of a baby, for instance, a couple's having sex is synonymous with that of 'making a baby' (*twa lralrake*). Besides, work refers to parents' performance of rearing a child into morally ideal adulthood as well. On a child's first birthday, for example, Rukai parents and grandparents would hold a feast for kin to celebrate the growth of the baby. This feast, named as 'making an elder' (*twa malrot'ang*), is held in the hope that the baby will achieve the position of being an elder, that is, get married and later have grandchildren. To make a baby an elder implies that the making of relatedness is dependent upon a married couple's work of raising a baby into adulthood, as indicated in the previous chapter. On the other hand, to organise the feast of 'making an elder' in a way could be understood as that the grandparents are really made elders in a social sense rather than because of physically ageing.

Drawing on these examples, the practice of doing or making refers to, at the most obvious level, the 'application of human energy to things' (Wallman 1979:4) such as doing garden work or domestic chores. Next, it refers to the act of causing to appear. More than that, work practices are associated with craftsmanship. This implies that the actor creates something out of raw materials, like sculpture, yet it

demands more than the expenditure of physical energy. Indeed, the practice of work as such, as Rukai elders note, needs one's 'heart/inspiration' (*kitremetr'eme*) for completion. In this sense, work is deemed to be a creative activity, as it is for the Piaroa of Amazonia (Overing 1989). In fact, the view of identifying the practice of work as craft stands in contrast to the Ancient Greek conception of work (in relation to production) being the opposite of craftsmanship (Vernant 1965, cited in Schwimmer 1979: 291; cf. Arendt 1988[1958]). Moreover, the act of doing or making refers to that of creation parallel with the image of God as the creator in Christianity. Significantly, the Rukai stress that the parents' devotion of effort in nurturance and education makes them as a whole the creators as well as the cultivators of their baby. At this point, the Rukai share a similarity with the Baining in that the creation of a social person is closely related with work practices (Fajans 1997: 7). Remarkably, the mutual affection between a married couple, as described in Chapter 2, has as much equal weight as their work concerning the creation of a person.

As regards places outside the village and fields, the area for hunting is not accessible to women and, interestingly, the practice of hunting is not a culturally defined work practice. Nowadays, Rukai men seldom catch fish themselves, but they sometimes sneak into the mountains to hunt in spite of the fact that the act of hunting is only allowed during the period of the millet harvest rite due to the ban by the government for ecological reasons. Aside from that, the hunting area and the practice of hunting are exclusively related to men, and I would regard it as a manifestation of maleness and masculinity. What I mean by 'maleness' lies in that not only are women not allowed to enter the hunting area, but also men should stop having sex with their wives at least three days before hunting. By 'masculinity' I refer to the fact that the Rukai still take hunting as a practice to demonstrate their masculinity, in particular the middle-aged and elders. The view that becoming a skilful hunter is constitutive of a man's virility shares a resemblance with gender symbolism in several Southeast Asian cases (M. Rosaldo & Atkinson 1975). As Michelle Rosaldo (1980) and Jane Atkinson (1990) note, given the imagination of the sameness of women and men, men amongst both the Ilogot and Wana are thought to be something more with respect to the practices indicative of power and bravery; this is exactly the case for the Rukai. This formulation of gender different is further confirmed when it comes to people's movement in social space in the Rukai context.

Compared with men's possession of more mobility in terms of their movement amongst different social spaces, Rukai women are confined to both the houses and gardens, as I was in my fieldwork. Except that a few women could be chosen by the

ancestral spirits to become spirit mediums before the advent of Christianity in 1958, the great majority of Rukai women are closely related to the activities characterised by human efforts, that is, work. This confinement to work practices further sets constraints on women's participation in village affairs in terms of their turning up at village meetings or 'public visibility', but their knowledge of what happened at meetings or other village-related affairs is immediately updated from their husbands' words. Although a few women were present at those meetings, they seldom spoke their opinions, as I observed, but they do often share their opinions with men such as their cross-sex siblings or senior kinsmen. Hence, both Rukai men's mobility and women's less public visibility in politics are the result of the women's intimate association with work practices and the spaces associated with them—houses and gardens.

Significantly, the meaning of work in the Rukai context cannot make sense without reference to its counterpart: ritual. Given that the distinction of work practices and ritual performance is clearly drawn as noted earlier, I further suggest that what underlies this distinction is the different perceptions of personhood and agency. First and foremost, the performance of rites (*asa lisi*; *asa*, roughly translated as 'preparing to become'; *lisi*, ritual objects such as betel nuts or reddish ceramic beads) implies that the practitioner—who either is possessed by ancestral spirits like spirit mediums, or possesses the competence to communicate with spirits like the headman of the greatest noble house in Taromak—serves as the vehicle of ancestral spirits.

Intriguingly, ritual performance has been confined mostly, but not exclusively, to men either in the past or at present. Prior to the introduction of Christianity in 1958, only a very small number of women could be possessed by ancestral spirits to become spirit mediums (*siya 'elr'eng*). Without any human volition involved in the qualification of candidates, spirit mediums served as vehicles for ancestral spirits. The process of being possessed, described by Tina Kanay, who was possessed before her conversion to Christianity, is expressed as that spirits come into the human body just like someone enters into a house. On the part of spirit mediums whose chief task is to perform the healing rite, the effectiveness of their healing practices reside in the agency of ancestral spirits rather than their personal prowess insofar as spirit mediums imagine themselves as the vehicles of spirits possessing potency to heal. Thus, I suggest that ritual performance is the 'action' or agency of spirits' potency realised through the vehicle of human bodies (of spirit mediums).

As regards the performance of domestic and communal rites, moreover, both the heads of houses and the headman of the community are seen as the



origin/source/head (*trangatra*), and their common duty is said to be to provide protection for his house members by means of ritual performance. Prior to the introduction of Christianity, every house used to have a domestic altar with one pebble called 'the protective spirit/guardian spirit' (*lekem*) under the central post (*lromotron*). Both the altar and the central post were only for the head of the house, and the women and children of this house were prohibited from getting close to it (Hsieh 1965). Around the central post, the father performed rites in relation to the wellbeing of house members as well as offering protective potency keeping danger at bay (Cheng 2000). Thus, the protective potency ascribed to the pebble inside the altar exerted its efficacy by way of the ritual performance of the father. At the moment of conversion, however, the priests forcibly took away this pebble, and then urged the new converts to place instead the Bible, a cross or a rosary in their houses. The Bible or the crucifix is said to protect converts and their family from any threat from Satan. Therefore, I suggest that the conversion to Christianity not only replaces the locus of protective potency in a house, but also makes God or Jesus Christ the new figure of the protector in houses, in the place of the father, the head of a house.

Furthermore, I argue that the ritual practitioner is making himself or herself part of the ritual objects. This is reminiscent of how Clifford Geertz analyses how the role of a king as a ritual practitioner was regarded as the vehicle of divine power in nineteenth-century Bali (Geertz 1980). As he describes it, the power of the king of the Balinese theatre state then is manifested in the splendour of the ritual cremation. Indeed, in the performance of ritual, the king is no more than 'a ritual object' (1980: 131) to traffic the divine power embodied in the person of the king, or put this way, the king is as much the regalia of divinity as the vehicle of divinity (cf. Errington 1990). That is to say, the king as a ritual practitioner in effect exemplifies that Balinese formulations of personhood are 'de-personalizing' (Geertz 1973: 390). The image of a de-personalised person, though an oxymoron, clearly depicts the peculiarity of a person as a ritual practitioner in Taromak. Being part of ritual objects, a Rukai ritual practitioner is empowered by and infused with potency from ancestral spirits, and thereby the efficacy of rites is actualised. In this regard, rites are actually driven by the agency of the ancestral spirits, and are the 'work' of ancestral spirits rather than human beings.

The potency of ritual objects (*lisi*) in ritual performance is further affirmed in the activity of *twa lisi*, 'to violate taboo'. The activity of violating taboo includes a wide range of activities, for instance, a child stepping upon the domestic altar (*calrak'ebe*) under the central post in a pre-conversion house, picking the plant called 'the nobles' (*talriyalr'alray*) on the hill, moving the betel bag of a spirit medium to



somewhere else, or bringing home the millet harvest ahead of the time determined by the headman of the greatest noble house. These acts are thought to bring the actor misfortune, such as becoming disabled or even cause his or her death. Literally, the act of violating taboo refers to 'making ritual objects' or to 'causing ritual objects to happen/appear'. When one exerts the act of doing or making (*twa*) upon the ritual objects or items in relation to ancestral spirits or potency, one is thought to be an agent instead of a vehicle in the face of these items full of ancestral spirits.

Drawing on the above discussion, I then suggest that whereas ritual is driven by and associated with ancestral agency, the practice of work is based on human agency in the Rukai context. Consider the Tswana of South Africa as a comparative example. For the Tswana of South Africa, ritual performance is seen as work, which implies skilled human fabrication (Comaroff 1985: 84), and much the same is the case of the Balinese mortuary ritual (Connor 1995). On the point of the agency attributed to ritual, the Tswana identify ritual performance with work, whereas the Rukai distinguish between them. The distinction of work from ritual performance is ingrained, I argue, in the different aspects of personhood, that is, a person either as a vehicle of ancestral agency or as an actor who can exert human agency. In this sense, for the Rukai work practice is related to a person as an agent, but is distinct from the point made by John and Jean Comaroff (1987) that work is a practice to realise selfhood amongst the Tswana.

However, my illustration as such is not implying that through practising work a person is able to achieve the individuality of a person as it is in the ideology of Western capitalism (cf. Dumont 1977). Rather, I point out that human agency in the Rukai context is conditioned by relatedness, as shown in Chapter 2 where I described how a person's ability in work is intimately associated with the quality of the preceding namesake. In this regard, as an activity manifesting human agency, work indeed is involved in relatedness.

### *Work and social classification of people*

The relationships between work and ritual as well as the notion of personhood implied by these practices corresponded with the social classification of people before 1965, when the land reform policy was put into practice. On the level of the village, the then chief, as the head and origin of a community, was the most important ritual practitioner in Taromak, in contrast to the commoners whose activities were work. The headman of the greatest noble house was believed to conduct rites. Before the land reform policy in 1965, garden work was foreign to people of noble houses and some young women were kept from domestic chores.

Based on the myth of ontogeny of the community and houses, Swmalralray, born by the union of a woman (married her brother then) and heaven in her chewing of a betel nut with lime from the sky, exerted power with the divine ritual objects to make the waters recede, so that land appeared in sight to allow the subsequent creation of houses and then the community (Utsushigawa *et al.* 1935). Thus, we are given a picture of division of labour along the lines of different kinds of personhood: ritual performance is for the nobles (*talriyalr 'alray*) as the descendants as well as the vehicles of heavenly power, while work is for commoners as the actors focusing on production.

In the wake of the land reform policy in 1965, however, every house in Taromak was also allocated a plot of land under their names.<sup>1</sup> One consequence of this policy is that commoners (*gawgawlre*) no longer complied with the 'payment of tribute' (*bwaya swalro*) to the nobles as they did in both the pre-colonial and colonial eras. In addition, the KMT government disentangled the ties binding land and noble houses, and in turn commoners and noble houses. Without the tribute from commoners, some male descendants of the then noble houses were said to have suddenly fallen into hardship due to their not being accustomed to garden work, and even some of their wives divorced them because of their failure to provide the house members. Despite the fact that the current headman and his brother at their youth have done waged work in a steel factory and at coalmine respectively, the performance of garden work or wage labour before Land Reform remained to be related much more with commoners than with nobles in Taromak. But we cannot ignore that this principle of social division of labour was to some extent unsettled in the changing socio-economic circumstances.

Though nowadays the contrast between work and ritual does not work as the primary, rigid principle of social classification amongst Rukai villagers, my discussion here is intended to point out that work practices and their association with personhood as an agent are made much clearer by means of situating them back in the historical and social milieux. In so doing, I indicate that the contrast between work and ritual is far from being an abstract mental schema; on the contrary, this contrast has its historical precedent and connects with the social groupings. What is more, the focus on how the contrast has evolved historically, though simply stated, unmistakably marks the centrality of work in Rukai daily life as I show in what

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<sup>1</sup> But it was not an item of private property in a jural sense since the KMT government classified the land the Rukai inhabited or their inheritance in the mountains as 'reservations'. Please refer to the first section of Chapter 4 for further discussion.

follows. In fact, the centrality of work as well as its significance in relation to domestic reproduction cannot be considered as complete without mentioning another counterpart of work: play.

## Work and Play, Work as Play

Let me begin with the case of the Baining in Melanesia to address the issue of how the relation between work and play is configured comparatively in order to illuminate the relationality between work and play amongst the Rukai. For the Baining, the category of play includes both children's games in the village and ritual, both of which are seen as antisocial in the sense that play represents 'the natural', whereas work represents the transformation of 'the natural' into 'the social' (Fajans 1997). In the Rukai context, I propose that the primary meaning of work is about production for domestic reproduction while play is 'non-production'. However, they are not always antithetical to each other on the grounds that the duty of production is not equally shared amongst people.

Rukai children are thought to play (*kivavang*) all day long, and before their parents or grandparents come back from work or garden work, they usually play games with their friends or siblings. During play, older children are supposed to keep an eye on younger ones in order that there are no accidents, especially when they chase after one another on the street. As noted in Chapter 2, children are required to share domestic chores regardless of sex, and are also sent on errands by their parents. The adults often say that children's help (*waska'elre*) with these domestic work, as something they do every day, is only play.

On the part of adolescents, young girls' participation in collective work exchange (*maisah'olro*) is always described as having fun in garden work. As for young boys, what they do in the men's house before initiation is domestic chores like cooking and sweeping. The bride service they offer focuses on domestic chores and the provision of assistance. Whereas male novices 'perform housework' (*twa tomatoma*) in the men's house as part of the training for initiation, work for young girls in the gardens of each participant house is identified with play.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the quality of industriousness is a critical requisite for marriageability; married couples are thought to be foremost in garden work or waged work due to their duty of feeding the members of a house. The obligation of work is always the priority of a married couple's activities, but that does not mean that they are denied having fun as the Baining are (Fajans 1997). For



instance, I once chatted to a married woman in the street just after her morning shift work, and I asked her where she was going later. 'I will play', said she on her scooter. Before she went home to do housework, she would like to have fun first. But actually what she did during the activity of having fun/play was just to meet her female kin and companions and share betel nuts and a glass of drink with them. As for men, they love to do similar things after work to what Rukai women do. If they breach the priority of work and just have fun with friends, they will be heavily criticised by their family and kin. For married adults, sharing food and exchange of words with kin and companions is interpreted as play, whereas their duty of care towards their house members refers only to work for domestic reproduction. At this level, play is thought to be antithetical to work when married adults fail to realise their role of food producers for their houses. This implies a hierarchical relation between work and play in terms of the priority of different activities in association with kinship obligation designated to them.

As regards the elders, doing garden work signifies more than bringing grain or the fruit of their labour home. Doing garden work, as noted in Chapter 2, often means to work with their same-sex companions or kin, and this is much stressed amongst the Rukai, since elders will have a good time through each other's company. 'We are not doing garden work. We have fun/play', said my foster mother when she worked with her female kin. Unburdened of the duty of looking after the members of a house, Rukai elders identify their practice of garden work with play. Compared to married couples' work practice directed towards domestic expenditure, the elders' doing of garden work turns into the meaning of play.

In the light of the above examination, I investigate what work is about when it pairs with play. Firstly, the primary significance of work, doing garden work in particular, is driven by the duty of nurturing house members. Thus, work practice in Taromak is about production for the sake of domestic reproduction, and in this sense, play is seen as non-production. This set of meanings holds true when we take into consideration that people are conferred with different kinds of work practices according to their positions in the house in terms of kin relatedness.

Children and adolescents are not the chief agents for conducting work practices, so their practices are either seen as the offering of help, or just play. They are assumed to perform work but their labour is not recognised because they are not assigned with the duty of feeding house members as their parents are. The elders' practice of garden work is 'doing work', but they tend to deem it to be play based on similar reasoning. Moreover, that children's doing of domestic chores and adolescent's labour exchange are thought to be help or play reveals that their labour



and contribution to domestic reproduction is downplayed under the guise of help and play.

Here several questions need to be asked: Why is the performance of domestic work not designated with as much significance to domestic sustenance as garden work and wage labour? Why is domestic work very often taken for granted? In what circumstance is the performance of housework as much socially conspicuous a practice in domestic reproduction as that of garden work/wage labour? In order to tackle these issues, I first discuss the symbolic salience of domestic work in making relatedness and daily sociality. Then I explore how and why the practice of doing housework is often downplayed, even amongst women practising them.

### **The Self-Evident Nature and Indispensability of Domestic Work**

From the discussion above, whereas garden work is considered as the focus of production and provides concrete labour for domestic reproduction, domestic chores, just like something that children should do, are apparently less remarkable or even trivial in adults' eyes. However, the lack of particular attention does not mean their insignificance. Especially when many complaints about the messiness of a house were made in daily lives, it rather implies that the orderliness and tidiness of a house are assumed to be a state of normality. But how can we reclaim the significance of domestic chores to domesticity from their seemingly insignificant triviality?

A case in point is that children were responsible for keeping the hearth lit. As noted in the last chapter, children's domestic chores, as part of their daily life, is thought of as helpful to a house, and in the past they were to keep an eye on the fire in order to keep the life of a house. Compared to the parents' garden work providing food for houses, the children at home were responsible for the maintenance of the heat of a hearth, a symbol of creating life for a house. In addition, they run errands nowadays taking food to the houses of kin at their parents' demand. An often-occurring scene during my fieldwork was that when the mother was busy cooking, she would ask her children to run errands on her behalf. Errands for children are their provision of help, and it means that their parents need their practice of domestic chores. Put another way, children are needed to conduct kinship mutuality whenever their parents fail to do so or are busy with cooking or garden work.

Another related case is women's provision of labour at weddings as mentioned

in Chapter 2. The content of the labour offered to the host houses on these occasions is chiefly domestic chores: cooking rice for making dumplings, decorating the house, preparing drinks and betel nuts for kin, and making floral headdresses. All these contribute to the progression of a wedding. For instance, many dishes in the wedding banquets are prepared by an outside catering chef, some of whom are villagers of Taromak. However, making sticky rice dumplings (*abay*, originally this refers to millet dumplings, but now it also refers to rice ones as substitutes for the millet ones) is quite critical to the banquet on the grounds that the host house considers dumplings ‘capable of feeding guests’. In this sense, the female kin’s work of making dumplings is much more significant than the outside catering dishes—which usually consist of seven to eight dishes including pork leg stew, a whole chicken, kinds of seafood, and fruit or dessert—since it is dumplings, the product of the female kin’s practice of domestic chores, that feed guests (see Plate 3.1).

What strikes me more, as far as the neglect of the importance of domestic chores is concerned, is that even Rukai women tend not to see their work inside a house as labour equivalent to that of garden work, not to mention that some unemployed Rukai men view their doing of jobs inside a house (for instance, an eating place) as the offering of help instead of ‘(garden) work’. Nowadays the term for garden work (*lavai*) has become synonymous with waged work because a wage is seen as the product of labour for domestic consumption, on which I elaborate in the following chapter.

The increasing importance of waged work for married couples underlies the salience of the efforts invested in work for the houses’ sake, though in a capitalist form of human efforts, namely, wages. With the overt and over-emphasised stress on the importance of wages, one implicit and unintended consequence is that the productive capacity of doing domestic chores is obviously played down, if not ignored. Consider the example that Rukai women’s practice of doing embroidery inside houses is even viewed by themselves just as domestic chores, rather than work (see Plate 3.2). It is not only because of the locality where the task of doing embroidery takes place, but also because distinct significance underpins the working practices of different kinds.

For example, Tina Ilesema is in charge of a workshop of tailoring and embroidery along with her two sisters, and they receive many orders from other villages due to their reputation for excellent work. During the period from May to August every year, they often have to extend their working hours till midnight in order to finish piles of orders. However, when doing embroidery along with Ilesema’s elder sister one June afternoon in 2004, I came to the question of how they



Plate 3.1 Kinswomen making sticky rice dumplings on the occasion of engagement



Plate 3.2 Women making cross-stitch embroidery



divided the wages since the three of them collaborated to finish pieces of clothing or accessories: one does embroidery, another tailoring, and the other sewing. She said that each of them would note down what they had done each day in terms of how many pieces of finished parts of clothing. The total wages from the orders were divided according to the records. 'This is not a wage', she continued, 'I do not do [garden or waged] work. I just come here to assist my sister. We are house members. Don't be too calculating'. Furthermore, Tina Ilesema explicitly identified the tasks of doing embroidery in her house with domestic chores when one day her neighbouring kin brought some sweet potatoes to share with her. 'I feel so embarrassed (*mainwa ko*)! I did not do any work at all, but I am so flattered to share what others worked on', she exclaimed.

Similar to the case of Turkish female workers who deny their work of garment making as labour (White 2004), Rukai women take their work of doing embroidery, which makes money and gains a reputation for craftsmanship in many villages, as domestic chores. Spatially speaking, the task of doing embroidery and tailoring was *inside* houses, and before embroidery becomes a commodity, it is one of the locally defined domestic chores. What strikes me is that the wages from their labours in this task do contribute to domestic expenditure, but the task, along with the wage from it, is still seen as what women should do as they are doing other chores. Their denial of a wage as a wage further attests to their neglect of the importance of doing embroidery, along with other household chores, with regard to domestic reproduction. Given their denial of a wage as a wage, it is not surprising to see how the calculating mind should be shunned when it comes to the issue of wage distribution.

Likewise, unemployed men never take the tasks done in the workplace of kin or in their house members' business as 'doing work'. Rukai men, except for those who are grandfathers, tend to identify themselves as the head of the house in terms of the provision of wage packets, and this is taken as the demonstration of their industriousness as noted in the last chapter. Both women and men identify the tasks done outside the house, or more precisely in workplaces like gardens or factories, with work, whereas those done inside the house, even though for wages, are identified with the domestic chores. In other words, the space in which work practices are embedded, instead of the product of labour alone, accounts for the significance of work in relation to domestic reproduction. In effect, this is related to the fact that the fertility of the land/garden/workplace is highly emphasised in Taromak, and thus people's doing of garden work is actually to acquire fertility from the land/gardens (cf. Harris 2000), which I discuss in Chapter 5.

However, the insignificance of domestic chores, especially women's labour,

shown here is only part of this puzzle. The rest of it includes the following questions. Firstly, if the practice of garden work is indispensable for domestic reproduction, then why do many women insist on growing millet instead of other cash crops? Secondly, the practice of garden work must stop during the mortuary rites, something which has been put into practice for generations. Under such circumstances, how do the Rukai, whether bereaved or not, maintain themselves in terms of the provision of food? First of all, I address this issue with examples of rice growing and millet cultivation respectively to investigate what garden work with different grains reveals.

## Work: Of Care and Love

In 1926, the colonial government introduced rice into Taromak to meet the demand in Japan during the Second World War. According to the colonial documents, the coexistence of paddy and millet was prevalent (SART 1928-32: 6, 10-11). In the pre-colonial period, the growing of millet was a critical economic activity upon which social rhythm and activities hinged.<sup>2</sup> However, rice has now become the main staple for the Rukai, either of their own cultivation or from the stores, whereas millet and millet dumplings (*abay*) are more like festive food since the Rukai only have millet during the millet harvest rite (*kalra lisiya*), which is held in the third week of July.

### *Growing domesticated rice as a daily labour of care*

Most Rukai people have rice as their daily meals nowadays, and rice either comes from part of their contract farming or is bought from supermarkets. In the colonial era, Rukai people even needed to buy it from the Transaction Office when they had a bad harvest (SART 1928-32: 20). Aside from this, the growing of paddy was done in double cropping, which many Rukai elders considered to result in high productivity of rice, in contrast to the relatively low yield of single-cropping millet. Interestingly, many elders recalled that while they were young, they loved to have rice because rice tasted sweeter than millet, and this remains the case in the present day. Both the high productivity of rice and its sweet taste offer an image of daily

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<sup>2</sup> In pre-colonial times, the economic activities regarding millet defined the timing for social activities, and the timing for work in millet entirely hinged upon the headman, who was thought to possess the power to communicate with the ancestral spirits to consult their opinions. Above all, no others were allowed access to his performance of these rites. If the acts of commoners violated the restrictions upon work in millet, for example, carrying ripened millet home before the proper timing set by the headman, they would incur temporary physical illness (paralysis for a short while) or even sudden death.

meals in Taromak comprising the consumption of a domesticated grain thought of as a delicacy. Their sensuous experience of commoditised rice seems to present a picture of changing domesticity during and even after colonisation.

One reason for the Rukai to grow rice after the take-over in 1949 is that the contract farming of rice was conducted with the aid of the local agricultural association, a governmental agency which offered low-interest loans, banking services, and farmers' insurance, and which was also in charge of agricultural affairs, such as technical assistance with growing new grains, or the newest fertilisers or pesticides. Thus, rice farmers expressed a sense of security about their efforts at the outset. After farmers handed in the agreed amount of rice to the agricultural association, they could definitely save a part of produce for subsistence. This dual security—the known cash income and produce for houses—offers an account of why the Rukai have continued to grow rice till the present. Based on this, Rukai people's tendency to grow rice has less to do with its foreign import of colonial authority or hard labour, and more with the fact that this economic activity is thought to secure both a source of cash income and a produce for house members.

With the increasing importance of rice to houses, however, what becomes of millet cultivation insofar as it has been a vital crop for their houses members? Or one radical question would be: whether or not rice has replaced the role of millet in houses as well as in the making of relatedness? If not, what does the growing of millet mean to houses when compared to the significance of rice for domestic reproduction? More fundamentally, what does the practice of growing millet reveal with regard to the making of relatedness in a contemporary context?

### *Growing millet as a labour of love*

Though rice is a daily staple for the Rukai, many elders would comment that millet is able to offer more energy than rice for people to do garden work. 'You would easily get hungry by having rice', as Tina Cumaliya said, 'but having millet would make you really fed and work longer!' But nowadays millet is more like festive food since millet alcohol (*ka vava*, meaning 'real alcohol') and millet dumplings are particularly made during the harvest rite in July. During the month of July, one common topic shared amongst women was what kind of food, millet dumplings and millet beer in particular, they prepared for their visiting children, kin, friends, and even co-workers and employers. It is quite common for villagers to be invited to share millet dumplings and beer at the houses of kin while walking in the street. Sometimes several houses would hire outside catering cooks to prepare food for the feast if they had more guests and kin to enjoy the festiveness and fun of the



gathering. Amongst all the banquet dishes, I found that people immediately grabbed one millet dumpling for themselves as soon as they were served. Though I am keen on millet, I tried to avoid it because there was often pork with lard inside. It came to be that I was always given one by the female elders sharing the same table with me, and they kindly persuaded me to eat it at the table because of its deliciousness. So I did.

Given their liking for millet, why do Rukai people take rice—a crop thought to provide less energy for garden work—to be their staple? If the contract farming of rice, as farmers remarked, could sustain their livelihood, why do they still conduct unprofitable garden work like planting millet?

The growing of millet sometimes becomes the focal point of familial quarrels between couples in terms of cost effective effort. One July evening in 2004 when chatting with one of my female foster kin in front of her house, I heard from a house next to hers Tina Niyana's husband raising his voice to tell her not to spend so much time on millet the following spring (all the houses are built in a long row and close to each other, so that it is easy for others to hear what happens in someone's house). 'It takes you much time to care for millet', said he, 'and you earn nothing from it. Come on, I will give you money to buy [millet from others]. Don't grow millet any more. The money and time you spent on it would allow you to buy much more [than what you grew]'. Seemingly annoyed with her husband, Tina Niyana answered back in a higher pitch:

Why should I spend money for millet? I am still able to grow millet by myself. Why do you stop me from doing garden work? I like to work. I grow millet not for money's sake, but for the children's sake. I will make millet dumplings for them when they come back for the reunion during the harvest rite. They love to have my millet dumplings. I don't need your money for millet! I can work for it!

Her husband then tried to calm her down by explaining that he did not want her to toil, but Tina Niyana firmly insisted on growing millet as her loving task.

Similar quarrels happened when the harvest of millet approached. Most female elders I knew were keen on growing millet in a small garden, and voluntarily spent much time on caring for it. In fact, as Tina Niyana's husband mentioned, the tasks for growing millet are work intensive because they need to be done manually, from tilling the soil, seeding, weeding to harvesting, unlike the process of cultivating rice which is mechanised for most part. The tasks of growing it are really burdensome and the husband showed his consideration for his wife based on an objective



observation.

Moreover, the husband's proposition of buying millet instead of growing it strikingly reveals the gendered forms of labour contributing to one house: the father views money as a token for all kinds of food to feed house members, which is his way of expressing and actualising the duty of care. By contrast, the mother's efforts and time consolidated in both growing millet and the making of dumplings manifest that motherly care is non-substitutive and unrivalled in the face of the proposition of millet bought with money.

For the Rukai, to care (*kado*) is thought of as the parents' foremost duty to children, as it is for elder siblings to younger ones. On the part of the father, the duty of care consists in both doing garden work and the protection by performing rites which was shown earlier. For the mother, her duty of care includes masticating food to feed babies, preparing daily meals, making children's favourite foodstuffs, sewing clothes, doing embroidery, and looking after a sick child. That is to say, inside a house, domestic chores are designated as the jobs that children and the mother are entitled to do, though some men would help with them.

The mother's duty of care in terms of doing chores, such as looking after a child and cooking, is seen as the expression of love from the children's point of view. For both the mother and children, the expression of 'love' (*matalane*) is utilised to characterise their affections towards each other, whereas I hardly ever heard children use the idiom of love to express their feelings towards their fathers. Additionally, the vernacular term 'love' (*matalane*) mainly refers to the familial affection between house members, different from romantic, erotic love (*mwabai'eisi*, meaning 'hungering for') between couples. Hence, I would suggest that the domestic chores that the mother does for a child are seen as the enactment of her love as care. This could be seen as an 'emotional economy' (Cannell 1999: 231) or 'a sentimental economy' (Salazar 1996: 138), both of which terms describe the emotional side of relatedness and/or social relations as being as significant as the moral and economic sides when a person considers whether or not the service or help is offered.

In contrast, the father would often use the idiom of feeding the house, and its protection prior to the introduction of Christianity, as the father's duty of care, and this is how the children think of him and his duty of care. If growing millet is a mother's labour of (locally defined) love towards children, then a father's duty of care is usually expressed in the idiom of his labour, usually in the form of money/wages. The deployment of money as a metaphor or substance to express a father's duty of care is more accentuated by the fact that more and more men performed wage labour after the fire in 1969, as I discuss in Chapter 7. Here, I

suggest that the ungendered oneness of spouses' labour as noted in Chapter 2 in effect acquires gendered practices of work: labours of love and care with cash.

As a result, the mother's labour of growing millet sentimentalises this pre-colonial staple, and accordingly the millet that she grows manifests her love, which can never be replaced by millet bought with money. A Rukai mother's doing of caring chores for her children is not only 'a labour of love' (Graham 1983: 16), but also the enactment of love, characteristic of Rukai mother-child relations.

### *Abundance from the productive capacity of time*

Several elders mentioned to me that if the ancestors had grown millet twice a year in the same way as rice, then they would not have suffered from hunger so often. That is why in the past the millet tribute (*swalro*) to the pre-colonial headman of the community served as the source of food to feed people during a bad harvest. However, the double cropping of millet was unthinkable precisely because the entire social rhythm is accorded with the growth cycle of millet: the time for burning weeds (*kalra kecela*, early spring before seeding), the time for weeding (*kalra lramwlra*, in spring), the harvest rite (*kalra lisiya*, in summer), and the time for chopping down weeds (*kalra bilabiya*, in autumn).<sup>3</sup> What would become of social life if, in one single year, there were two millet harvest rites along with the other events accompanying them?

Fundamentally, for the Rukai the increase of the produce of millet lies not in the time of its growing, but in how much time is spent in harvesting it (see Plate 3.3). Tina Elre'eva, for instance, who is her late sixties, always takes her time in doing this work. In July 2004 I worked with her in reaping her millet, and it took us almost one week to finish it, though her millet garden was quite small. Every morning, I had to await her arrival till around ten, for she needed to finish the domestic chores. After her arrival, she worked at a very slow pace, or precisely, it seemed to me that she did not intend to reap all the millet hastily. She sometimes shook the roughly weaved net with bells to chase the birds away, and then she reaped about twenty ears of millet before she took those ears reaped the previous day out of her work hut to dry them in the sun. She complained that the rain before our task of reaping had made the ears charcoal in colour, and then she showed me the most beautiful ones amongst those

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<sup>3</sup> The time for seeding is dependent on what the elders' dream reveals. If it is auspicious, it is the time to seed a tiny plot. If millet shoots sprout, then it is the time to cast seeds over all the garden. If not, then the family would invite someone who has succeeded in the task of making the millet shoots sprout to conduct this task on their behalf. If it fails again, then the family would go to request the pre-colonial chief for some millet from the tribute as seeds. If this still failed, then the family would give up this garden and find another to plant.



Plate 3.3 An elderly lady harvesting millet

she had reaped, which were to be the seeds for the following year.

Then Tina Cumaliya, whose millet garden was next to ours, fetched water from somewhere near the mountain and they just made vegetable soup on a temporary hearth in front of her work hut for lunch. Around half past eleven, we had lunch in the shade of a tree, and we chatted about their children and grandchildren along with some jokes over lunch. Once in a while, Tina 'Elre'eva would move the ears of millet to expose each of them to the sun. About half past two, we started to reap another twenty ears or so before we took another break. During the work, their children would come to ask for advice, or sometimes their kin would come to share betel nuts and have a chat over their harvesting tasks. Around half past four, or even earlier, one day's work came to an end, and they moved the ears of millet back into the work huts.

I was astonished at the slow pace of reaping the millet, and it seemed that it should only take at most two or three days to finish. Why do they spend so much time on reaping millet? Is it only grounded, as Bourdieu forcefully argues, in that people only have plenty of time to invest in work due to the work of the power-holder's dominant ideology, which assumes the prevalence of economic scarcity in a society, and which, in order not to squander material goods, endlessly inculcates that the ruled should spend time on labour (Bourdieu 1977: 176-7; 1990: 117)? If there are no shared values or folk conceptions of time invested in labour other than that of the superior's ideology, then how can we make sense of the practices from the actor's view?

Notably, the duration of work time invested in millet is symbolically associated with the amount of the yield of millet. This seems paradoxical since the yield of millet is, objectively speaking, determined earlier than the time of harvest. However, according to Rukai elders, the yield of millet is thought to multiply by virtue of the slowing-down of the work pace in the gardens. In other words, the prolongation of work time in the act of reaping, rather like magic, stands for the abundance of the millet harvest of the year. This way of multiplying the yield of millet does not mean that land in Taromak is infertile; conversely, compared to other Rukai villages in southern Taiwan, Taromak has long been famed for the fertility of its land and being rich in crops. As mentioned before, millet is deemed to be a grain that provides more energy for garden work, which is actually pivotal for what the Rukai perceive as the maintenance of people's lives. From the labour process of harvesting millet, the association between millet and domestic reproduction is made clear, albeit millet is no longer their daily staple today.

Accordingly, the abundance of the millet harvest not only counts on the weather



and care from cultivators, but also on the work of time, which delivers symbolic effects on the increase of the harvest. Work time in millet, I argue, is tantamount to being a productive agent multiplying human efforts in the harvest. It implies that the duration of time in work participates in the increase of the fruits of labour. Compared to both harvesting rice which is intended to be done with a fast tempo, and factory work which is thought to enhance the produce by speeding up as shown in Chapter 6, the slow work pace in harvesting millet creates an aesthetic form of work, which accrues the yield of millet growing from the fertile land in a seemingly effortless, and even enjoyable manner.

### **Death: Negation of Both Work and Sociality**

In Taromak, the practice of garden work is forced to come to a stop for a couple of days as soon as a death occurs in the village. Indeed, prior to the 1980s, villagers were not allowed to do garden work until the burial of the dead, whereas the bereaved members were not even allowed to cook on the hearth. I propose that the occurrence of death amounts to the negation of doing garden work, and that it in turn brings a threat to the domestic reproduction of other non-bereaved houses in terms of the discontinuation of garden work or wage labour. To make this point, I set out to describe the process of the mortuary practice in Taromak, and then how domestic reproduction is continued by kinwomen's performance of domestic chores, especially the cooking on a temporary hearth.

In the event of a death, especially after the corpse has been sent home, female kin set out to the bereaved house to offer assistance, and amongst other things, to cook food for kin coming to keep vigil till the eve of the burial, which is a significant task in the mortuary practices. Before the 1980s, all the residents were prevented from doing garden work when a death occurred, yet nowadays only the family of the deceased, such as children and siblings, will ask for leave of absence, while other residents, who conduct wage labour which does not allow them to ask for leave for too long, will at least ask for leave for one day for the funeral. Many young people have to ask for leave of absence—meaning that they will not earn wages—from their workplaces and say that they come back to work for the deceased. In the light of these, a death is regarded as the antithesis to garden work on the part of both the bereaved members and residents. Prominently, it even brings forth the denial of the capacity of the bereaved to enact daily sociality in terms of daily exchange of words and food.

What is more, both the bereaved and non-bereaved members were not allowed to have food from the hearth or water from the stream. All the hearths in the village were without fire then. There were two ways to prepare food and water. The first one was that if someone walked home without knowing the news of the death, other passers-by would give a sign like winking to inform the homecoming villager. Thus, one could hastily prepare roasted sweet potatoes underground and put some chilli in water jars as if it were not stream water. A death puts out the fire of the hearth in individual houses, which means that the villagers, whether bereaved or not, are denied the activities regarding nurturance of the lives of their houses. In this sense, a death seems to possess the capacity to interrupt the making of relatedness in everyday life.

Soon after the news of a death, a temporary hearth would be built outside the bereaved house. During the period of vigil keeping, it was, and still is, the female kin of the bereaved who are responsible for the cooking till the burial of the deceased. In some cases, men also come to help with killing a pig, which is a heavy task, so that women can cook it for kin coming for the vigil (see Plate 3.4 & 3.5). Thus, not only the bereaved but also other villagers, at least before the 1980s, relied on the food prepared by them. When death negates the practice of garden work, I suggest, only the practice of doing domestic chores is able to maintain the lives of the bereaved. When a death happens, the whole village becomes a house at large since every one shares food from the same hearth, and the idea that 'all villagers are kin' (*wa cegecegele maletet'ese*) is clearly evoked to stress the duty of keeping vigil. The practice of keeping vigil is always said to have the bereaved be accompanied by kin (*mwa lraw'elrang*) in order not to leave them in solitude and grief.

Death not only forces the whole village to face the temporary discontinuation of generating life but also disconnects the bereaved from daily social activities. During the mourning period, which takes one month now but was one year in the past, the bereaved are not allowed to walk out of the house, except that adult children can continue work after the burial. They need to stay at the bereaved house, and the spouse of the deceased in particular sticks to this confinement. From the forth day of the burial onwards, kin would come to invite the bereaved to their houses for dinner, which is called 'making [kin] play' (*a kivavang*). Before the 1970s, as I was told, this invitation for dinner was issued on a rotation basis; that is, the bereaved would go to dinner at a different house of kin every day. During my fieldwork, the practice of 'making kin play' was to gather the kin of the bereaved at someone's house to prepare many delicacies as a banquet (see Plate 3.6). The bereaved, especially the spouse of the deceased or some female members, were aided or escorted by some



Plate 3.4 Women making sticky rice dumplings for a vigil



Plate 3.5 Men killing a pig for kin coming to a vigil



Plate 3. 6 Kin gathering to share food in the practice of *a kivavang*



kinspersons, for their grief made them too weak to walk properly to that house of their kin for dinner. The content of the activity of play includes only sharing food with kin and chatting over betel nuts and drink, far from being a carnival celebration during mourning as Olivia Harris (2000) observes in Bolivia. Therefore, as the bereaved are denied any participation in social interaction with other members in the village, the practice of play during the mortuary practice in effect recharges them, through food and chatting over betel nuts and drinks, so that they are reincorporated into the making of domestic sociality.

## Conclusion

My analysis of the work practices in Taromak shares common ground with Jean Comaroff's insight that defines the act of locally termed 'doing or making' as the native notion of 'work' (Comaroff 1985: 84). This allows us to capture a range of activities that can be seen as 'done by human beings' as well as what the act of 'doing' means in a local context. On the other hand, it allows us to discern the interplay between work practices, 'non-work' practices, personhood, agency, and the making both of relatedness and of domestic sociality. Moreover, another significant import is that it offers a possibility of how anthropologists can make sense of work and wage labour as well as other forms of work in contemporary situations, which I discuss in the chapter to follow.

I elaborated the significance of work practices by focusing on two sets of relationality of which work is part. The first set is the meanings of work in relation to ritual, and the second is in relation to play. In the first set of work/non-work practices, I have argued that the distinction between them is predicated on agency of different kinds ascribed to human activities as well as different aspects of personhood evoked in these practices. Work practice emphasises that the one who conducts it is an agent whose efforts are the cause for the product of labour. In contrast, ritual performance highlights both the practitioner as the vehicle of ancestral spirits or heavenly power and then ancestral agency as the cause of ritual effectiveness. As for the second set of relationality, work is about production for domestic reproduction, whereas play is seen as non-production. Unlike the clear-cut distinction between work and ritual, the meanings of work and play need to take into account the sets of relatedness that the actor is out of, such as children or parents.

Given that the labour of children and adolescents is usually seen as or identified with play, I have pointed out that this recognition reveals the attitude of the Rukai

who usually assume the self-evident nature of domestic chores. Both women and men view their tasks done inside houses, even for wages, as just domestic chores or help. Yet if we turn to women's practice of growing millet along with other domestic chores, their work practices are seen as the enactment of motherly love to children, which is the actualisation of their duty of care. Conversely, the father tends to employ money as the expression of his duty of care to house members. Thus, a married couple takes on respective gendered forms of labour to contribute to domestic reproduction: labour as love and care with cash. In addition, this reveals how emotions embedded in relatedness are intimately associated with economic practices, and this offers an account of why some Rukai women voluntarily invest time and money in the unprofitable planting of millet. Indeed, time devoted in harvesting millet plays the role of productive agent geared to domestic reproduction.

Moreover, with the negation of garden work by the occurrence of death, I have argued that the practice of domestic work is far from being trivial; for instance, the practice of cooking by female kin during the mortuary rites in effect serves to support the lives of both the bereaved and other villagers. In addition, the practice of play, though viewed as non-production, indeed possesses the capacity of reincorporating the isolated bereaved members into the making of domestic sociality.

In much of my above description, men's wages and labour and garden work are usually identified with each other, and I present it as the Rukai expressed it to me. The question to ask now is: why and how do the Rukai conceive of wage labour as (garden) work and wages as the product of labour? This is what I tackle in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4

### **Money and a House for Remembrance**

In this chapter, I examine the intertwined relationships between money and domesticity. By investigating the multiplicity of meanings of money, I argue that money—symbolised as both the product of work and a living thing with the capacity of fertility—appears crucial for both domestic and communal reproduction. In addition, one consequence of the introduction of money is that the calculability of money is turned into one dominant measurement of the value of gifts in kind. Furthermore, money is thought of as the embodiment of movement, and thus should be put into the practice of mutual aid amongst kin, whereas the accumulation of money by an individual and a single house is taken to be morally threatening. In order to cope with this moral condemnation, people with larger amounts of money or pensions set out to build well-decorated houses, not merely for the sake of the conversion of individualised wealth into houses. In contrast to the implication of money embodying movement, the Rukai underline that their achievement of building houses will be remembered by their offspring.

Within the social sciences, the general view of emphasising the significance of money as both a symbol of destructive force and an agent which enables social transformation, as Bloch and Parry (1989) point out, obviously neglects that the meaning of money cannot make sense without reference to the existing worldview. In line with their criticism, I further suggest the overemphasis on the destructive power of money apparently downplays the agency of the local culture during its encounter with the expansion of capitalism. Recent studies through in-depth ethnographies show us that money, as well as other commodities, takes on its singular meanings through the mediation of the totality of local transactional orders (Carrier 1990; Kopytoff 1986; Bloch & Parry 1989). Taking this approach as the point of departure, I scrutinise the multiplicity of meanings of money in transactional orders as well as in Rukai people's day-to-day experiences, or even taken-for-granted attitudes. In so doing, some hidden dimensions of meaning concerning the construction and representation of money and its relations with other cultural practices are possibly made clear.

At the outset, I discuss briefly the historical conditions for the formulation of

the idea amongst the Rukai that doing wage labour to make money is easier than economic practices of other kinds.

### **'Inalienable' land, 'alienable' labour**

After the take-over of Taiwan by the KMT in 1949, the ownership of land in Taromak changed hands from the Japanese government. With the projects of both the land survey under colonial rule (Fujii 1997: 214-5) and the land reform policy of the KMT government in 1965, land became state-owned property and this placed the Rukai in a position of living on the land of the state, whereby the relationship between the Rukai and land were complicated because of the intervention of legal codes and restrictions. A critical and influential measure taken by the KMT government to preserve the area of the Rukai habitation was the establishment of reservations, thereby preventing land in this area—including the mountains, hill terraces, riverbanks, and land for houses—from commercial sale by any individual, especially to non-indigenous peoples. The Rukai are entitled to ownership of land, according to the Act of Reservations, after they register with the land office five years after their cultivation of it. In contrast, individual transactions are allowed for privately owned land, which is on the margins of the village and beyond. Even after the land reform policy, every house was given a plot of land for residence and cultivation as noted in Chapter 3, but legally speaking, land in Taromak is not allowed to be the target of trade with non-indigenous people. Especially in the case of the land of the riverbanks, the Rukai of Taromak could not even build permanent buildings, on land which is legally 'theirs', the actual reason for this being hydraulic preservation. Under such circumstances, on land of this kind, they have grown cash crops in response to market demand in the different historical phases. Even though some Rukai people have saved money to purchase land from Taiwanese, they maintain that land should not be sold in order to gain money for immediate expenditure.<sup>1</sup>

In the eyes of the Rukai, on the other hand, land in the mountains is viewed as replete with spirits of different kinds: ancestral spirits, land spirits and other

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<sup>1</sup> One past occurrence with respect to the idea of land being seen as a foothold is that before the law of reservations, one Rukai couple parted with a portion of their land in the mountain terrace in exchange for money from a Taiwanese farmer. After several years, this elderly couple failed to get their land back since that Taiwanese farmer was reluctant to sell. Many Rukai people in the present day mentioned this event to remind themselves that land or heirlooms could not be easily bought back once traded away.



unknown and even potentially malevolent spirits. When planning to open a new plot, for instance, elders definitely avoid the mountain ridge, for it is the pathway for unknown spirits to walk along. Some Rukai Christians told me that they did not feel any spirits around after conversion because they have God in mind. Nevertheless, the idea that the land in the mountain is full of spirits still prevails. For instance, when I followed the Rukai to the mountain and stayed in the former settlement overnight in January 2005, I was warned to beware of spirits and ancestral spirits around, and elders offered a tiny portion of food and alcohol in order to pacify the spirits as soon as we arrived there.

Aside from being the source for subsistence, land was construed as one's security base, which resists being sold as a commodity. But this in part has to do with legal restrictions. Recognising the limitation of the law yet seldom speaking of it, for instance, Tama Gelete, who is in his fifties, complained about the regulation banning the fragmentation of land when it came to the inheritance of land amongst his children by saying, 'It [law] forced me to give land to my first son, for I cannot divide it into two. I am worried about my second son. He might lose his base. My poor boy'! His words disclose that land as a security base on the one hand seems to construct a person by reference to land for one to work on, and on the other is also related to legal restrictions on land fragmentation of the reservations. It cannot be ignored that land is regarded as more heirlooms or possession than private property in the sense that, before the land reform, land that one house had been working on was left to the inheritor of a house, and the relations between the land and a house were built upon their continuing practices of work.

To purchase private land on the bordering area—mainly on the boundary of Taromak and Likabon (see Map 2)—is a common way to own a plot of land to grow cash crops (e.g., the case of the betel vine garden in Chapter 6) or to enlarge or rebuild a house. For example, the youngest brother of my foster mother did not inherit any land owing to the law, and he then has worked outside the village to make money. With the consent from my foster mother's children, he was granted a share of the land that is the inheritance of my foster mother. No matter how hard their lives were, the children of my foster mother never spoke of parting with land in exchange for money. 'We have to work in order to keep our land', as I was told, 'If we sell our land, it seems to give much money in hand. But it would be used up one day. Never sell land away. We do waged work (*twa lavai*) for the land's sake'. As the combination of both coercive law and a security base in the community, land seems to be an embodiment of inalienability in a contemporary situation, and at the same time the sale of land is construed to erase a person's existence as an occupant in the

social world. Under such circumstances, the Rukai turn to manual labour to maintain their livelihoods.

Moreover, Rukai people's poignant experience of losing their houses in the 1969 fire intensifies their thought that making money through wage labour is able to promise them a better life. When I came to the question of why they did wage labour, be it working in factories, pelagic fishing, or working on building sites, the devastating fire event immediately comes to the foreground of their stories. I first begin with the case of Tama Gecele, whose house was next to the one in which the fire started, and who had one of the few houses that remained intact then:

It was the day before the mid-autumn festival. The weather broadcast said there was going to be a typhoon the following day. Whenever a typhoon is coming, a föhn wind [a warm, dry wind descending on the leeward side of the mountain and causes a sudden rise in temperature] would occur. It got terribly hot and dry. That afternoon, a boy from the house next to mine was herding his cattle along the riverbank in Ilrila. He accidentally touched the iron grids of the high voltage tower, and then he was struck to death. His father was told and ran to the riverside to collect his body. He then insisted on taking the corpse back home. Few knew about this accident and his father did bring the corpse into the village. That violated taboo (*twa lisi*)! It was too late to stop it. That very night, the boy's house suddenly caught fire. It happened in the middle of the night, and all the residents had already fallen asleep. Frightened to get up, I hastily made my wife take my sons and daughter to walk towards Ilrila to find shelter. I covered my youngest son, who was just born a few months before, with a wet cloth and later went to meet my wife. The fire spread so quickly because our houses were made of thatch and were easily burnt down. I had a dream that night. I dreamed that there was a rope in front of my house, but I did not dare to cross it. The fire continued for one night and one day. That night, almost all of the houses were burnt down.

Soon after the fire, the people of Taromak were relocated, with the help of the Taitung branch of the KMT party, to a stadium in the nearest primary school since the only school in Taromak was destroyed. 'Because of the KMT', said Tama Gecele, elected as the head of a village after the fire, 'our houses were built in no time'. The following year, there were floods caused by another typhoon striking several houses near the suspension bridge leading to their old settlement of Ilrila. Both events came to render their experiences of the conditions of life and existence as mishap and hardship.

Deprived of their houses in the fire, the Rukai recalled their thought then of

getting jobs to make more money sooner for the sake of the members of the house. As described, the general situation was that elders stayed in the village because 'a house needs people to live in'. The reason was that only the occurrence of a miscarriage would make people abandon their house and then build a new one at a different site. At that time, elders did garden work to support themselves and their houses at that time. By contrast, married couples often took children able to work with them to the cities, while leaving the younger ones for the grandparents to take care of. In addition to married couples, grown-up children were thought to work for houses, and their wages equally provided resources for reproducing the houses, as shown in Chapter 2. Following their husbands, the wives usually worked with them, either in a factory or on a building site. Exceptionally, when the head of a house worked in the coalmines like the late Tama Adraliyw, or did pelagic fishing like Tama Lisatake, their wives stayed at home to care for the children. What is more, whenever I enquired into the reason for taking one job instead of another, most of them simply answered: the wages are much higher.

Even with his house intact, for example, Tama Gecele decided to move to Chungli in northern Taiwan along with the members of his house since he got a job as a building worker and so did his wife. It was thought that the land—referring to the income from cash crops like lemongrass and plums—could support people's lives for a while, but not for too long, since they well recognised that cash cropping was subject to price fluctuations, as I explain further in Chapters 5 and 6. Alongside their relatives' experiences of wage labour in the cities (e.g., in a factory or on a building site), manual jobs seemed a more secure source of cash income by which they were able to, if possible, live a better life.

In the wake of Rukai people's recognition of the urgency of rebuilding houses and feeding the members of their houses after the fire, therefore, the significance of money with respect to the maintenance of lives weighs greatly. Prior to the fire, the task of building houses relied entirely on labour exchange amongst kin (*molray'iyi*): gathering raw materials for houses (such as thatch, trunks, and bamboo), male kin cooperated to build houses while female kin offered assistance by making sticky rice dumplings and soup for lunch. After completion, the host house would prepare roast pork and alcohol to treat all the kin in return for their aid. After the fire, however, Rukai elders said that houses, designed and built by many Taiwanese workers according to the government's scheme of re-establishment, were made of cement and bricks from merchants. In other words, before the 1969 fire, the kinspersons' work practices were responsible for the construction of houses, whereas in its aftermath money did the job in lieu of kinship morality, along with help from the government.



## The Sweetness of Money

‘Children like money while elders like [wine] bottles’, Rukai elders express themselves by drawing the comparison as such, ‘but the adults have to teach children the proper way to collect money’. One winter afternoon in 2003 when I took a walk around the village, a little girl, about four years old, ran to me and said as if it were a matter of course, ‘Auntie, give me money!’ Her palm, still with some dirt in it, was held high over her head, and, as warned, I told her I had no money. Two older children following her came to grab her away, and said to her, ‘She is not your mother. You go to your mother to ask for money’. I heard the little girl saying that she needed 20 dollars for bread and milk tea.

Why do children like money? Many elders recalled that children would ‘take’ without asking, rain boots, aluminium pots, and steel nails and sell them to a merchant in exchange for money. Of course the act of taking away things from a house infuriated their parents or grandparents when they found that there were no pots to cook with or that one boot was left. Once they had money, the children went directly to a grocery store to buy sweets. Tama Alitake, a man in his forties, says that he and his friends had done similar things when they were young because they found sweets like lollipop or jelly just so tempting. Some children even picked corn by hand in order to collect money for sweets. For them, the taste of sweets is unforgettable for ‘it is just fascinating. It makes you feel delighted’. Remanema, a woman in her thirties, states that before she attended the junior high school (at about twelve years old) her mind was occupied with ways to collect money for sweets. For children, money is just in exchange for the consumption of the pleasure of sweets, and they come to understand that money is paid for with a concrete item or even ‘labour’.

In addition to their sensual liking of sweets, adults stress that they always shared sweets with their siblings or companions, and this remains the case today. It is often found that if a child has one piece of lollipop, it must be passed around from one to another till all of his or her friends have had a bit of it. It seems that sweets, acquired through money, are meant to be shared amongst friends, and their existing friendship is perpetuated.

When sent on an errand to buy daily goods for their parents or grandparents, many children expect to receive some small change for sweets or drinks. Errands are thought of as what children should do, and small change is to ‘approve of their good behaviour’. I was impressed by the fact that when grandchildren from the cities come to visit their grandparents in Taromak, elders often give them some coins as a gift.



The attitude of expecting money is related to a shared and highly emphasised practice that people, either visitors or parents, who come from somewhere outside the house, are expected to 'bring gifts' (*sa-acac'ebe*) to the members of the house. It is fair to say that Rukai children's expectation of money from kin or visitors is rooted in their experiences of being given gifts, or sometimes money, either by people from outside the house or by adults who reward their performance of errands as noted earlier. For younger children, money means gifts, whilst older children know that one cannot ask for money from people of other houses or visitors, that is, they have a sense that only the members of a house are entitled to share money.

### Money Walks the Path of Work

When the Rukai were hired as workers in contracted-out jobs for their Taiwanese employers after the 1960s, they were paid with *sao belesa*, a wage, in exchange for their work in cash crops. The then common mode of contracting to organise workers and the work process is the practice of *bao*, a folk mode of piece rate work in Taiwan. The general situation was one in which employers created a broker or a foreman to recruit people to work for them within a certain period of time, and therefore they paid wages according to the final product that the workers handed in. Significantly, what concerns employers most is the final product of the worker rather than intervention into the work process for the sake of enhancing their control over workers (Shieh 2003). If the duration of the contract lasts more than a week, employers tend to pay the wage weekly. The experience of piece rate work is related to how the Rukai construe the relation between a wage and the product of their work. At the very moment of handing in their product of work, either in the form of grain or a piece of the finished task, the process of wage payment, as Tama Sepitai states, is vividly expressed in the image that money walks as people do:

...Money walks (*dadavace*) the path (*lrolrodra*) of our [garden] work (*lavai*) in the *taok'ei's* [boss'] field. Just like we collect rice to take home when we work in the rice field. Paddy rice walks the path from our work in the field.

As indicated in Chapter 2, the imagery of *lrolrodra*, or path, first of all, indicates a physical path on which persons or animals walk or pass day in and day out, and which then clearly inscribes the landscape. A person has her or his path to walk, and so does money. Here one crucial question is to be asked: how can money walk as if it

possessed the life force? Those with experiences of collecting wages offer an account of their experiences of the process of payment they underwent in person:

If you do the roselle-handpicking, for instance, you have to carry all the sacks of roselle to the foreman before you leave for your house. He weighs your sacks, writes down the number, and then does some calculations in front of you. He usually gives you a slip with his signature, on which the weight of roselle and the wage are written, and you cannot forge them because of his signature. With this slip, you go to the boss and therefore receive wages from your boss.

In the process of wage payment, workers both witness and take part in the construction of how the final product of their work undergoes, step by step, several procedures of 'transformation' in which it is gradually turned into money in their hands. Their physical presence and witness to the process of wage payment combine to contribute to their perception and experience of the transformation of the product of their work into money/a wage.

Thought to walk as persons or animals do, money, moreover, is considered to possess the capacity to give birth to a baby. 'When you put money into a bank account, especially saving accounts, over time you will suddenly find you have more money than you initially had. It [interest] is "a child of money" (*lralrake ki aiso*)', Tina Nomilra said to me. Drawing from their experiences, money is conceived of both as a living thing with the capacity of fertility and as the fruit of the final product of their work. As mentioned in Chapter 3, work from the members of a house aims to support, maintain, and reproduce life within houses, and, as the embodiment of both the fruit of work and fertility, money is deemed a thing that naturally feeds and nurtures the people of a house.

More strikingly, money also appears to be a focal point in some Rukai people's prayers to God in the Presbyterian Church. In order to strengthen both the converts' faith and the power of saying prayers, in one sermon the Rukai priest addressed the congregation thus: 'No matter what you ask of God in your prayers, God never fail you. If you ask for health, He will promise you health. If you ask for money, He will promise you wealth. You must be as devout as possible in your prayers, and then God will definitely hear them and make them yours'. By contrast, the sermon in the Catholic Church preached the distinction between the mundane daily life, which always refers to both work/wage labour and money, and the spiritual one, the latter of which is taken as superior to the former owing to the supremacy of eternity.

This undermines the image of a disapproving attitude towards money and

avarice in the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church as known from the literature. If we take their symbolisation of money seriously, we will see that money is viewed as a pivotal substance to reproduce a house, and, by the same token, it definitely does the same work to sustain the church. In order to cultivate the habit of the weekly donation to the church, for instance, the clergyman, since the initial introduction of Christianity in 1958, gave every convert a saving box to save money for Sunday donations. Aside from preaching the ideal of hard work to glorify God as Weber (1992) notes, the Presbyterian Church of Taromak also preaches both the importance of money for the church, and the promises and blessings from God incorporate the category of mundane money for the sakes of both a house and the church.

My discussion of Rukai symbolism of money/a wage is inevitably reminiscent of its counterpart in the case of Columbian peasants as described by Michael Taussig (1980). According to Taussig, wages from the plantation are seen by the peasants as barren and are never used for domestic reproduction, unless the money is baptized at the church. Baptized money is thought to have the power of fertility and is then used for expenditure, and secures the social bonds between households, which is taken to be the local version of commodity fetishism. What underlies Taussig's argument is that even money is symbolised as a thing with living force and fertility, personal forms of social relations are at once replaced with those of things/money, and this therefore amounts to the emergence of commodity fetishism. His argument assumes that the personal form of social relations in pre-capitalist societies is the only form encoding social relations, and I suggest that this presupposition is premised upon the mutual opposition and exclusion of gift and commodity exchange (cf. Gregory 1982; Mauss 1990[1950]).

Drawing on the meaning of money as a pure commodity, Taussig's argument is impeccable. However, he neglects other meanings with which money is imbued when it is symbolised in local cultures, and at the same time, the social relations in terms of money are far from being the expression of commodity fetishism in a local context (Bloch & Parry 1989). In addition, I would argue that Taussig ignores the alternative possibility of representing social relations in the form of things other than capitalist society, of which Rukai people are an example. Put another way, at issue is the particular cultural constructions of personhood and things, rather than money or any single commodity *per se*, that take on the role of agent to reshape social relations. As we see in the pages to follow, when the relationships between houses are expressed in the movement of money, Rukai people regard it more as a form of mutual aid between kin. In this sense, money, aside from disguising social relations, indeed makes a contribution to social reproduction.



## Money in the Social Circuits of Exchange

One day when Tina Salomay chatted with me over her cross-stitch embroidery in the yard of her house, she came to the question of whether or not my siblings and I gave money to my mother once we had started working. I answered her affirmatively and told her what we did in my family. After a short pause, she said that my siblings as well as our spouses are generous enough to do that, and she continued that she would feel delighted if her children regularly gave her money. I know her son has a job with a decent wage in Kaohsiung (see Map 1), and she also mentioned that her son spent money on some electronic appliances for her house. Her words puzzled me for a while. In fact, she is not the only person I met in Taromak who revealed complaints, usually in an understated tone, about not receiving money from their children regularly.

As many middle-aged people confirmed to me, they are required to make money for the sake of members of their houses, which is in effect the main driving force which makes them work for wages while they are still young. Except for the unemployed, from my observation, most young people do put their wages into the domestic expenditure. Why, then, do their aged parents seemingly express the opposite? It is partly because the adult children's duty to nurture the members of the house is so strongly taken for granted that the children's contribution to the house goes unnoticed. Yet, what do the elders refer to when they make such suggestion? One evening, for instance, Tina Normi just came over to the house of my foster family to complain about her son because she had given him much money to cancel his debts. She felt upset but had no idea how to stop this situation. To comfort her, my foster mother said, 'What we ask of our children is that they remember to leave us money for betel nuts (*shiya langai sabiki*, 'leaving [money] for buying betel nuts') once in while. Mothers do not anticipate them leaving us thousands (*kodrolro*, 'bundles of bank notes')'. My foster mother passed her the betel basket with areca nuts, the lime, and the betel pepper stem inside, and then they carried on their chatting.

Why money for betel nuts? My foster mother explained to me that this term refers to money from the children, which is left for the parents only, not for buying food or daily goods. Money for betel nuts illuminates the salience of betel nuts in the daily social interaction of all Rukai adults. During the fieldwork, walking in the streets of Taromak, my hand was always ready to take out betel nuts from my



rucksack to share with villagers whom I met with to initiate a talk. In Taromak, whenever a group of people sit down around a small table in front of a house, the very first act is to share betel nuts. Almost every house has a small plaited basket (bamboo or plastic) for betel nuts (*sabiki*), lime (*lra'e*), and betel pepper stem (*tangau*), which is usually put on the small table to share with kin and visitors. Conversely, hiding betel nuts for oneself is highly disapproved of. Rukai people may not blatantly criticise it as selfish to a person's face, at most making a joke of his or her being stingy (*maiciciy'ilri*).

Apart from those bought from betel nut stands, chewing betel nut properly is considered to create a sense of mutuality amongst those who share them. The way to prepare a proper betel quid is said to be by removing the stalk, breaking it with the teeth and taking out the heart, laying some lime and a small slice of the betel pepper stem and then, optionally, covering it with the betel pepper. All items in the betel nut basket are indispensable for the reason that they combine to produce the reddish juice in the mouth, and, as is stressed, such an act spells out that all those who share betel nuts are 'mutually compatible (*mah'oah'oa*)', or 'mutually fond of each other', redolent of the case of a married couple's sharing of betel nuts at a wedding as indicated in Chapter 2. Over the sharing of betel nuts, the acts of chatting, gossiping, commenting on as well as discussing familial affairs and the sharing of feelings start to spread around the quotidian betel nut basket.

Seen from this perspective, the elders' expectation of money for betel nuts from their adult children underlines as much the creation of kin mutuality as the need for sustenance. Betel nuts serve as the most prominent thing for creating people's mutual affections towards each other, a form where social connectedness is evoked and reproduced. For the elders, the prime grouping of people in their daily interaction is their counterparts from other houses, for example, their siblings and friends, while the members of their own houses slide into the background. Thus, connectedness with other houses is what they are more concerned with.

As a consequence, what underpins the expectation of Rukai elders of being left with money for betel nuts is that the practice of sharing betel nuts contributes to both the creation of people's mutual compatibility and the reproduction of their social relatedness. The consumption of betel nuts is at face value seemingly tangential to the reproduction of a house *per se*, but in effect it matters greatly. More than that, the practice of sharing betel nuts in daily situations reveals a hidden dimension of the reproduction of a house; namely, the social relatedness with other houses is as crucial an aspect of the domestic reproduction as the in-house consumption amongst members.

At a daily gathering, the appearance of alcohol is a little less frequent than that of betel nuts. After work, some adults—more men than women—often gather and chat over alcohol and betel nuts, and villagers who pass by are often invited to join them, if only for a couple of minutes; importantly, it is difficult to turn down such daily invitations. Indeed, the act of turning them down with an explicit refusal is nothing less than a breach of the existing social connectedness. However, wives hold disapproving attitudes towards men's squandering of money on alcohol, though 'if he does not get too drunk to work, I could stand that [consumption of alcohol]'. Only the festive consumption of alcohol on the occasions of weddings or the millet harvest rite will not incur such condemnation since that alcohol is collectively consumed for the celebration. Getting drunk on such occasions is allowed because people enjoy the festive hilarity in the company of kin. In spite of the significance of the festive consumption of alcohol, drinking on the individual level might call forth complaints from wives, yet it is still tolerable on the condition that the husbands still work for money after drinking alcohol. Beyond this clear line, alcohol consumption definitely leads to familial quarrels.

In this regard, the meanings of alcohol consumption are context-dependent: in festive situations, collective consumption signifies conviviality amongst people. By contrast, on the level of individual houses, consuming alcohol is said to be tolerable if the husband manages to work the following day. It is suggested that it is the act of not doing work after drinking, rather than the act of consuming alcohol *per se*, that renders it the antithesis of domestic reproduction.

Furthermore, as I discuss below, money for the Rukai is also meant to circulate amongst the houses of kin in accordance with their upheld morality, to wit, to offer help (*waska'elre*) amongst kin. Hence, I suggest that money embodies the movement of exchange through which the bonds of houses are made visible and tangible, and the fertility of money sustains and reproduces social connectedness of a community which is thought to be based on kin ties.

One form of gift exchange between houses is 'the gift for celebration or condolences' (*lrobolr'obo*) on the occasions of wedding feasts, grandparents' birthday parties, and funerals. Let us consider the funerals. Money in white envelopes, apparently influenced by Taiwanese customs, is often considered to give a helping hand to the bereaved. In the Rukai dialect, the bereaved house is termed 'those who are in misery' (*matiya thalrithi*, 'quite miserable', used as a noun on the occasion of mourning). The duty of kin to help with the preparation of a decent funeral is pivotal for the deceased to join their ancestors in the heavenly homeland. What is more, the deceased are thought to show their worry over the conditions of

life of the bereaved, even after the burial, and money as *lrobolr'obo* is used as much for settling the financial difficulties of the bereaved as for soothing the worry of the deceased. In addition to the work of cooking offered by the female kin noted in Chapter 3, money as a gift of condolence is seen as a preferred form of aid to the bereaved. 'Nothing is more needed than money for the bereaved', says Tina Remetenga, 'and that is what kin are supposed to do'. In other words, money not only offers practical assistance to organise a decent funeral as the fulfilment of a kinship obligation, but also serves as a medium to express an emotional aspect of kinship mutuality.

Another form of gift is for a newborn baby's one-month-old celebration (*ong'olre*), which literally means 'drinking'. In this case, Rukai elders are inclined to prepare gifts in kind instead of cash, and gold accessories such as necklaces and bracelets are their favourite items. The elders' strong liking for gold accessories for a baby—which is seemingly influenced by the Taiwanese customs—has much more to do, I suggest, with their fondness for body adornment as well as the shared attitude that gifts should be visible to others. Nevertheless, Rukai elders are often presented with a dilemma: what if the hosts cannot tell the (monetary) value of the gift in kind? Then the host, the elders presume, might frown upon the value of their gifts, at which they could feel 'embarrassed/shy/shamed' (*maiyyinwa*). In order not to embarrass oneself, a gift of cash in red envelopes is widely utilised just because 'everyone knows how much it [the gift] is'. That is, the calculability residing in money is rendered into a common idiom for the measurement of the value of gifts, especially amongst middle-aged people, whereas the elders hold an equivocal attitude towards cash gifts.

Interestingly, on the occasion of preparing gifts for the collectivity of villagers, money is usually more often used amongst men than women. Towards the end of collective work exchange (*maisah'olro*), for instance, a farewell feast is held in the yard of the leader's house. The mothers of the participant girls are expected to prepare food, drinks and betel nuts, and the girls' beloved ones (*sisilranga*) also bring rice, dishes, and drinks as a return gift for the timber that they take to their houses. All these food and drinks, or *lawlri*, are displayed on the ground of the yard, and all the participants sit in a circle to share food. Usually, food and drinks are given as gifts on this occasion, yet recently some residents offer a gift in cash instead. At the farewell feast in 2004, several men gave money in red envelopes as their gifts to the participants, whereas women prepared sticky rice dumplings, roast pork, and drinks, and stood in for those who did not have time to prepare food, like Tina Dramalrai who slipped 1,000 NT dollars to her female kin to make sticky rice dumplings on her



behalf. In 2005, however, some of the men who had given money the previous year brought food and drinks as gifts instead, as they were short of money. For a house with hardship, money serves as a critical substance for domestic maintenance in a realistic sense. Under such circumstances, money is intended to stay to nurture a house, rather than to be put into the practice of sharing amongst villagers on such occasions. This implies that the reproduction of a community is supported yet also constrained by that of a house.

Similarly to betel nuts, money should never be secretly hidden or kept for one's own sake, since this is morally condemned in the context of Taromak. If one does so, he or she 'had better hide away from all of us and make it unknown forever more', one middle-aged woman commented in a very harsh tone, redolent of Fennella Cannell's observation of the Bicolanos of the Philippines (1999: 24).

Failing to help kin with money means that one only conducts exchanges with non-kin, and money that is given to them stays within the confined boundary of a person as an individualised entity. Accordingly, one's identity seems to be socially effaced from the communal setting. With the movement of money amongst kin (of a house or of different houses), the identities of a person as both a member of a house and of a community are evoked and then come into existence, and simultaneously the connectedness between the two parties involved is thus perpetuated. By contrast, drawing money outside the social orbit of exchange is no more than annulling the identities both of a person and of a house as part of a community. In this sense, neither does the appearance of individuality along with the introduction of money replace the notions of personhood, nor does the 'rationality' inherent in money bring its inexorable conquest over domestic morality, both of which refute Simmel's thesis (1990; cf. Bloch & Parry 1989). Admittedly, the calculability in money brings forth one common measurement of the values of gifts, yet the singular meanings of gifts in kind are still shared amongst the residents.

However, there is one condition for the Rukai to accumulate money in a house without causing severe criticism, which is to renovate their houses or establish new ones.

### **From Retirement Pensions to Houses for Remembrance**

Several elderly Rukai women, in particular those who had recently retired from work, built brand new three-storied houses and then held feasts to celebrate the completion of their houses. Interestingly, they already had a well-built house for



themselves and their children to live in, but they still invested a huge part of their retirement pension in a new house. By the time I left Taronak, there were several new houses still under construction.

Why does a house matter? For the Rukai, a house is where kin relatedness starts and takes on meanings. Co-habitation ideally epitomises the construction of relatedness: being born in a house, sharing millet and rice, and, until the advent of Japanese colonisation, members of a house slept together in the living room and then were buried in the burial beneath the house. The Japanese government banned the practice of in-house burial for sanitation's sake (Hsieh 1965). People living in a house share togetherness in terms of the same house name, food consumption, and a common burial. A house contributes to the making of life and serves as the terminal of one's journey, particularly for a married couple. In the cemetery in the settlement Ilrila, for example, there are many paired graves for couples, and surrounding them are low cement walls to keep them separate from others. When one of the spouses dies, very often two graves for them are dug at the same time. Spouses are one and together, not just 'until death do them part', but even beyond death.

A house matters, and so does its decoration. For instance, with the approach of Christmas every year, the Catholic Church holds a competition for the house decorations, and even non-Catholic residents are also quite keen on embellishing their houses. In the month of December, whenever several women gather and chat over betel nuts, many of their topics revolve around house decorations: singling out which house is fanciful or stunning, talking about their plans to decorate their houses, giving suggestions on where to find some materials, offering help with the decoration, or sharing some spare fanciful things such as singing Christmas fairy light. In this sense, the decoration of houses inscribes the visual landscape with women's adroitness. In 1999, for instance, I attended Morini's mother's funeral, and, as part of the Catholic funeral Mass, the Rev. Father in his sermon particularly praised Morini's mother's skill in house decoration and embroidery.

In the daily settings, it is often found that the outside of a house is decorated with several unpolished gemstones, or that plants and flowers cover most of the structure of a house. Some hosts adorn the eaves or the gate with wood carvings whose common motif is the human figure. As Retese, who is in her early forties, said to me, 'The outside of a house is also part of a house. I decorate it not only for members of my house, but also for others to admire its beauty'. As for the inside of the house, it is striking that different kinds of headdress are neatly laid inside the glass-fronted cabinets in the living room (see Plate 4.1). Men's headbands (*'elr'ete*) given at the initiation and headdresses with boar's teeth and eagle's feather



Plate 4.1 Display of decorative items and headaddresses in the house of the headman

(*akamocw*, a headdress for formal occasions) are sometimes paired with store-bought decorations of feathers or artificial Formosan lilies. In addition, women's formal headdresses (*akamocw*) are made in a similar design, though with more beads and artificial wild fruits. Their wedding headdress (*kalivathalre*) is said to mark and make known the woman's virginity at marriage. All these headdresses express the personalities of the members of this house, and 'they are made to be visible', as Malakay, in her thirties, said of the visibility of personality in things:

...people of Taronak love to demonstrate everything we have. Otherwise no one will know how good or how rich we are! So a house must be decorated as beautifully as can be. All headdresses are to be displayed in the cupboard and are never hidden in storage.

Significantly, hiding away these headdresses, along with garments, is practically tantamount to concealing the existence of a person. At Tama Adraliyw's funeral in August 2004, for instance, all of the headdresses and gorgeous ethnic garments were hung along the wall inside his house (see Plates 4.2 & 4.3). This was my first time to have a chance to look at such a magnificent display during mourning. For years, the only setting in the bereaved houses that I had seen was that the walls and cabinets were covered with several pieces of plain white cotton cloth. This practice is thought to be influenced by the Taiwanese custom, and indeed it is a common mortuary practice amongst the houses converted to Christianity, either Presbyterian or Catholic. Certainly, dissent to the practice of hiding away headdresses and clothes is focused on the view that things for adornment are, as the wife of the current headman says:

...for people to get to know what the deceased has achieved in his life. Hiding them away is but taking away what he has done for this house. Our ancestors never hid things away when they died. When I die, I want my children to display all of my headdresses and clothes.

It is fair to say that personal identities and achievement enter into the tangibility of things, from where the ephemerality of personal biographies acquires its concreteness and therefore is made visible to others (Hoskins 1998: 8). My observation of how the Rukai are enthusiastic about adornment, and of how they themselves stress the display of these items indicative of their personal qualities, draws attention to the relation between outer appearance, personal qualities, and adornment. Insofar as to identify one's inner beauty in terms of qualities with an outer appearance, the Rukai case has something in common with the Balinese (Howe



Plate 4.2 Ethnic garments displayed during mourning





Plate 4.3 Display of the headdress of a man of a noble house above the mortuary freezer

1984; Wikan 1990) yet in a slightly different way. For the Rukai, clothing and accessories are associated with personal qualities, or more precisely, they are the objectification of qualities, meritorious ones in particular, and hence the character of a person known to others. In a similar vein, a house—its decoration, having headdresses and garments, and the togetherness of daily interaction—consolidates the invisible and ephemeral aspect of the humanity of the Rukai, standing in contrast to the fluid movement that money embodies. Tina Lamadai told me the reason for her building a new house with her retirement pension:

If I leave my retirement pension to them [children], they have money to use while they are in need of it. However, when the money is used up, nothing is left to them. Money is just gone! After thinking about it, I decided to build a beautiful house instead. Look! This three-storied building is quite roomy. When my children and grandchildren come to visit me during the millet harvest rite or Chinese New Year, it is possible for all of them to stay in my house. Isn't it wonderful? ... After my death, this house will be left to my children and grandchildren, and they will remember that *their mother and grandmother built this house*. They will remember me. Money cannot stay forever. Money is useful because we can use it to help our kin who are in desperate need of it. Money is good. But I want to have something for my children and grandchildren; something that is more reminiscent of me. A house is such a thing. If I leave them my pension, I will soon be forgotten when my pension is used up. If I leave them my house, I will be remembered forever more!

Similarly, Tina Doloke also expresses her worry, 'If I leave nothing to them [descendents], they won't remember me. I will feel "lonely by being forgotten" (*masi'elreme*)! No one will remember that I am their ancestor'. *Masi'elreme* means 'feeling lonely due to being forgotten', and very often it describes the feeling of loneliness with no one familiar around, especially when one is away from home. Most of the time, women employ this idiom of emotion to describe their anxiety about not being remembered or being left behind by either their children or friends.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, a man is deemed to be the head of a house and thus to feed the members of his house is his duty. Let us consider the houses built with men's wages. During the period of the 1960s to the 70s, the reason several Rukai men engaged in pelagic fishing was because the wages were paid every six months, and this was called 'money for houses' (*an-chia-fei*, a loanword from Mandarin). Not surprisingly, 'money for houses' was put into the building of new houses in which only their wives, children and sometimes parents then lived.

Interestingly, Rukai men usually, at least as far as I observed, show their feelings in relation to the members of their houses in the idioms of duty, responsibility, and protection, and feel upset rather than lonely when they are forgotten by either friends, kin or those whom they regard as socially connected. Tama Gecele, for instance, expressed to me his distress at such an act of forgetting by a man who had received help from him during the fire in 1969. To be remembered, as he states, is not 'to expect him to give me something in return. Only the exchange of words is enough. I am not happy with that. How can one forget those who give you a hand? I cannot imagine it'. It seems to me that men stress that they are to be remembered through their deeds or achievements. That is, relatedness is constructed in the process of a myriad of practices, and dwells in people's memory as well as in memorable and enduring things such as a house or headdresses.

In insular Southeast Asia, houses amongst some Austronesian-speaking peoples serve as the 'memory palace' and the 'structure for memory' (Fox 1993). For the Ilongot people of the Philippines, for instance, the old house bases during their migration serve as the vehicle of their shared past, and Renato Rosaldo considers that to be 'the spatialization of time' (Rosaldo 1980: 55). For the Rukai, I would suggest that people's awareness of the past is through the objectification of time, by which the 'thing-ness' of a house solidifies the ephemerality both of time and personal experiences.

What is more, the conversion of pension money into houses involves the issue of conversion between different practices of exchange. Olivia Harris (1989) argues that in Bolivia, precious metals like gold and silver are represented as things with the power of fertility, and any secret individual appropriation of them is at the price of random life-taking by the mountain spirits which ensure fertility. Through the pouring of libations onto the earth or into their bodies, both the violation of the morality of communal prosperity and the endangering individuality are thus transcended. Similarly, Janet Carsten (1989) presents the Malay case in which money is taken to be the symbol of individuality, threatening moral community embodied in domestic reproduction, but such a threat could be transformed through daily practices of cooking in order to secure domestic reproduction. Both authors' theses underline how the conversion between the individual accumulation of wealth and the exchanges concerning the shared morality hinges upon the core practices constitutive of the moral order of the life world to transcend the endangering force from the monetary increments of individuals.

In the case of the Rukai, I would point out that the practice of building houses transcends the threat from individualised wealth, but on the other hand, it is precisely

because of the investment of money that the establishment of houses is made possible. Accordingly, kin relatedness is embodied in houses, exists in people's memory, and inscribes a landscape which is never effaced from the community either physically or socially.

Nonetheless, the unintended consequence of building a new house instead of giving away by helping kin may be to make more acute the differences in wealth amongst villagers. Still, people of more wealth cannot refuse to help kin with a small amount of money. More significantly, the intriguing and spectacular scene at the feast for celebrating the completion of a new house is that hundreds of bottles of alcohol are provided for the reason that the host should show generosity to all the guests, and to allow villagers to drink to their heart's content is the prime duty of a host on such occasions. In feasting, the host, though not giving away money to kin, turns money into an amazing amount of alcohol to share with all the villagers in cheerful festiveness. As one woman who built a house a couple of years ago mentioned to me, a host is required to offer as much alcohol as they can since people would despise the host if he/she provides more soft drinks than alcohol at the feast. It seems that giving alcohol negates the accumulation of money that houses represent.

### **Intertwined Biographies of Money, Persons, and Houses**

The practice of house building in Taronak shares similarities with the case of the Zafimaniry houses of Madagascar (Bloch 1995), particularly in the sense that a house provides a visible medium for people to objectify their ephemeral experiences in the flow of time. Amongst the Zafimaniry, beginning with the bamboo-woven construction for the newly-wed, a house gradually gains its 'bone', that is, wood replaces bamboo to become the material of a house, and this corresponds to and takes part in the life process that a married couple experience. Moreover, gaining children and grandchildren gives more stability to both the relationships between a couple and the structure of their house. After their death, the fertility embodied in the appearance of their offspring makes the old house 'a holy house', which is thought to bring the blessing of fertility to the offspring (Bloch 1995: 69-83). A house, therefore, more than being only a site of living and sharing food, takes on a multiplicity of meanings along with the life process that the founding couple undergoes in their life. Houses outlive people and become permanent things to remind offspring of their ancestors whenever they come to the holy house to ask for the blessing of fertility. In this sense, a house is rendered into Zafimaniry people's 'biographical object' (Hoskins 1998: 8),



which gives concreteness to the inhabitant's ephemeral experiences.

In the case of Rukai houses, I suggest that the meanings a house takes on are connected not only with the conditions of people's existence, but also with its capacity to absorb money in order to transform the threatening potency of accumulated wealth. The biography of a house begins with the birth of a married couple's first baby as Chapter 2 showed, and this baby manifests the couple's responsibility for raising the members of their house. With the passing of time, people age in a house, and the money they make sustains both people's lives and the growth of a house in terms of decoration.

Moreover, houses are charged with emotions by those who spend their whole life inside. Aged people foreseeing the approach of their death, spend their pension money on building brand new houses with exquisite decorations in order to be remembered by their offspring. The expression of loneliness due to being forgotten amongst the elders implies that becoming an ancestor is less automatically acquired after death than associated with a person's achievements throughout her or his life, which is concentrated on the building of a well-decorated house. An exquisitely decorated house is left to the children as a memorable inheritance to attest to the identities of those becoming ancestors. At the same time, a house appears to be a tomb-like object in which the togetherness and oneness of a married couple are made visible to all.

The practice of building and decorating their houses, as a consequence, transforms accumulated wealth into a house, a morally good, heirloom-like object made of the achievements of the house builder, which is taken in the sense of what he or she does for the members of the house. In this sense, it is through the visibility of a house that the making of the relatedness amongst members under its shelter is manifested in a tangible form and is inscribed in the memory of living members. A house is more than an emblem of social status, though sometimes it inevitably appears to be so. It seems that the differentiation amongst people in terms of wealth can be diminished by feasting to celebrate the completion of a new house. More prominently, a house objectifies the accumulative efforts of the house builders—a married couple—in work for the sake of their dependents, and at the same time gives a tangible form to the making of ancestry in the enduring memory of descendants.

Taken as a whole, the biographies of money, persons, and houses are intertwined in the flow of time. In their intertwined biographies, kin relatedness is embodied in a house as part of the landscape as well as inscribed in the memory of their offspring, which is achieved through the transformation of the endangering force of the accumulation of money by an individual. This multiple-dimensional

process echoes 'an interplay between permanence and impermanence' (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995: 39) with respect to economic efforts, the ongoing process of making kin, and the animate aspect of architecture. Most of all, the processual interconnection between money, persons, and houses shows that a house is not just 'a metaphor for the house as economy' (Gudeman & Rivera 1990: 2) in its static sense; it rather implies how the process of building a house as part of the domestic economy at once interacts with and mediates people's work and effort in the capitalist economy.

What I have presented is Rukai people's experience with money and work in the community, where social activities such as weddings and domestic work occupy the centre stage. As noted in Chapter 3, however, the Rukai also acknowledge a culturally defined workplace where garden work, later wage labour, is carried out. Shifting to another context, I would like to tackle the following questions in the next chapter: when money appears as a commodity form for labour, how do the Rukai conceive of money as a wage? In the work process, how does a wage intersect with kinship morality from the Rukai point of view?

## Chapter 5

### Conviviality at Work

In the previous chapter, I have shown that money is symbolised as a living thing with a capacity for fertility viable for domestic reproduction. Money is also regarded as the embodiment of movement, in that money should be used to help kin in need of money rather than being held in the hands of individuals. However, this is only part of the story about Rukai people's experience of the capitalist economy. Since money is obtained from people's performance of wage labour, I call attention to the work process to look at how a wage is constructed in relation to kin relatedness. Thus in this chapter, I examine Rukai people's experiences of piece-rated work in an attempt to illuminate the intersections between reciprocity, work and wage payment. Given the indigenous distinctions between the garden, or a place for garden work and the village, or a place that people inhabit as noted in Chapter 3, the focal point of analysis in this and the next chapters shifts to the culturally defined workplace in an attempt to depict another side of their experience of wage labour.

In Taromak, when in the late 1960s a lemongrass plantation increased dramatically beyond what labour exchange amongst kin (*molray'iyi*) could cope with, Rukai owners started to recruit kinspersons as 'workers' to perform cash cropping, and wages were in turn paid for their labour. Interestingly, whereas kin-employers consider their relation with kin-workers as similar to the employer-employee relation, kin-workers take this to be a practice of mutual aid. Meanwhile, the practice of wage payment is seen for what it is in the eyes of the employers, but for workers it is regarded as a reward from kin, rather than as a payment for their labour.

Much the same goes for the case of work with roselle in a contemporary context, not only in terms of wage payments but also in the deployment of relatedness harnessed for wage labour via the moral obligation to help (*wask'aelre*). Significantly, an employer is thought to provide the gift (*acebe*), such as foodstuffs and alcohol, as an expression of generosity so that the mild coercion of recruiting villagers for wage labour would be alleviated. In the guise of mutuality, workers express their willingness to work for kin at lower wages by identifying their labour as help for kin. More strikingly, in cooperative labour, the workers' joint earnings are divided equally amongst participant houses not individuals, whereby each house is given its deserved

share. This implies that the contribution of additional members from each house is thought of as help to, and is subsequently submerged in, the total production.

Despite working for kin at a lower wage, the Rukai instead accentuate the conviviality of work in the company of kin. In effect, this is tantamount to the creation of domestic sociality in the work process, in that company is conducive to the conviviality that a socially isolated individual or house very much needs in the Rukai context. I thus argue that conviviality in work manifests, to paraphrase Joanna Overing (1989), 'the aesthetics of production', which implies the creation of domestic sociality in the work process.

### **Of Wages and Mutual Help: The Good Old Days of Growing Lemongrass**

Amongst other cash crops in the late 1960s, Rukai elders and middle-aged people love to reiterate their work experiences in growing lemongrass. The memory of the work with lemongrass is often construed in nostalgic terms since people were more concerned with sharing with kin than earning wages (*mwa belese*). As Batwlake, a man in his early forties, said:

Umm...lemongrass. Even now, I can smell the aroma of lemongrass. I will never forget it. I was young then. Every afternoon, about five, I think, several small vans filled with bundles of lemongrass came down from the fields in the mountains. One after another, the queue of vans was magnificent. As the vans went by, some lemongrass would fall from them. We kids would run to pick them up and took them as swords to play with merrily in droves ....The drivers or the hosts of the fields never stopped to collect these bundles of lemongrass. Blades of lemongrass were our toys in the afternoon. But nowadays, most people keep a close eye on what they grow and never let crops be lost on the road. The loss of crops is the loss of money. Everything is different now. Few people would like to share with others, I feel. Most residents are more concerned about money than about their kin.

It seems that the significance of growing lemongrass lies in the host's generosity (*mathiathinalre*) in allowing children to keep the bundles of lemongrass instead of showing a calculating attitude towards the cash crop. The host's attitude as such stands for the intention to share with others, even in the trivial form of toys. In addition, the period of growing lemongrass is often expressed in the image of plenty,



and is experienced as a time of affluence to many villagers. Conversely, the calculating mind-set at present indicates that what concerns the owners is material gains rather than the sharing of them, yet it is also associated with, as several elderly residents spontaneously put it, that their lives at the present time are less well off.

From the 1960s onwards, lemongrass was one of the crucial cash crops in several eastern and western villages in Taiwan. Its essential oil functions as an ingredient for making natural insect repellent and ointments, and the trade in lemongrass made up part of the export trade in the national economy of the day. Without exception, the merchants in the lemongrass agribusiness were all Han-Chinese, and a common way to recruit workers for lemongrass was the practice of *boa*, the folk mode of the piece rate system in Taiwan (Shieh 2003) as noted in Chapter 3. In the area of Taitung, for instance, Han-Chinese merchants in lemongrass came to the village of Taromak to look for workers, and then lent them lemongrass seedlings, the cost of which would be deducted later from the due wages. Lemongrass is easy to care for because its strong aroma keeps insects away. It takes about four months to ripen, and its roots proliferate remarkably. The only thing that needs more attention is the rainfall during the reaping, for this profoundly affects the yield of its essential oil. Workers need to prepare a waterproof canvas to protect the reaped lemongrass from rain. These features were consequently taken to show that growing lemongrass could earn wages without much effort, encouraging more and more Rukai people to join in. As Tama Mesele, who is in his late sixties, recollected:

At that time, we were quite busy in the lemongrass [*goswi*, a Japanese loanword means ‘fragrance’] fields because it ripened really fast... My wife and I could not manage it. So were many others in the village. We then asked our kin to conduct labour exchange. You work for me today and then I’ll work for you the following day. We needed to reap it as fast as we could. Then we could sell it to the ‘boss’ [*taok’ei*] to get our wages. I had bundles of wages in my house because I grew so much lemongrass... It was good to have bundles of wages. We didn’t worry about money then.

With the increase of the lemongrass fields, the deployment of labour exchange amongst kin could not keep up with its speedy growth. Tama Mesele, like others, had to ask kin who did not grow lemongrass to work for him, and then paid them wages instead of using labour reciprocity. Some workers were married women who lived in the neighbouring villages. These married women loved to work for their kin because they themselves enjoyed working in the fields, and they were even more pleased that they could have wages in return for offering help (*wask’aelre*). The younger sister of

Tama Mesele, Tina Angasina expressed her enjoyment in her work for kin:

... [then] my brother needed more people to reap lemongrass. My daughter was quite young then and I brought her with me to reap lemongrass. I liked to work with my kin in the fields, for we had fun at work. Besides, I had some wages when the work was finished. It was good (*masalr 'ilri*, [of something] being morally good, or [of someone] being good-looking) to help my brother. It was good to get wages by helping him.

When a job came to an end, the employer in lemongrass, in addition to paying wages, had to offer betel nuts, alcohol, drinks, and food for kin-workers. All of those foodstuffs for the workers are '*agane si ong'olre*', or 'eating and drinking'. This is redolent of the long-standing practice of labour exchange (*molray 'iyi*), in which the host had to prepare pork, drinks and alcohol to express gratitude for the help from kin. Without these foodstuffs, labour exchange is then construed as that the host wants kinspersons to labour only, which is frowned upon by the Rukai, no matter how jolly the work process is.

Indeed, Rukai elders aged over sixty explicitly express that the payment of a wage (*sao belesa*) includes both cash and foodstuffs or/and extra gifts. In contrast, younger people take a wage to refer to cash paid for their labour, but they consider the provision of gifts (mainly foodstuffs) to be what an employer should do. Once failing to offer food and drinks, the employers are viewed as 'mean and stingy' (*maiciy 'ilri*), because 'they only want us to work, and do not give us anything to eat and drink'. This entails two questions. Firstly, we have to ask how the power to recruit people to work or labour is disguised through kinship; secondly, it implies what a just payment to a person's performance of wage labour, as well as whence exploitation is thought to emerge in a local context, which I discuss in the next section.

Moreover, labour exchange without food and drinks is then identified with a host's mild coercion to extract labour from kin. That is to say, both kin and the host share the acquiescence that labour exchange should be actualised in a socially recognised form, such as the consumption of food amidst sociability. Seen from this perspective, labour exchange based on kinship reciprocity is more about the swapping of identical practices. I thus suggest that the practice of offering foodstuffs to those who labour for the host lessens and then transforms the mild coercion of the host's request into moral imperatives amongst kin.

As Bourdieu (1977, 1990, 1999) clearly indicates, aside from the working of a time interval between exchanges, the provision of gifts make the reciprocity amongst

kin different from swapping, in which a direct exchange of service and gifts takes place at the same time. It then becomes synonymous with the actualisation of the common spirit of mutual help so as to transform the inappropriate disposal of labour amongst kin. That is, Bourdieu views the reciprocity in labour exchange as a form of gentle symbolic violence, in which people only recognise the self-evident nature of reciprocity and thereby a request for a 'fair return' is unthinkable. This is the case in Rukai women's perception of what a wage means.

When that Rukai woman regards labour offered to her brother as a practice of help, and thus the wage appears to be more like a reward indicating her brother's generosity rather than her just payment. Whereas her brother simply calls a spade a spade and a wage a wage, so that the employer-employee relation is made apparent, the sister still maintains that her work is part of the moral code of siblingship, that is, the salience of relatedness is played up. It seems that a female sibling is more inclined to think of wage labour in terms of kinship morality, but in fact her brother initially thought that the opportunity of wage labour should be allocated first to kin, though he did not explicitly term this 'help' or 'mutuality'.

Drawing on their historical experience of cash cropping, I indicate that various methods of recruiting kin for labour were in accordance with the scale of production. Whether it be labour exchange or wage labour, an employer was expected to provide foodstuffs and alcohol to simultaneously demonstrate generosity and disguise the force to recruit kin for work. In addition, the making of relatedness and that of relations of production, associated with how a wage is perceived, coexist in their engagement in cash-cropping.

### **Experiences of Piece Work in Modern Days: The Work Process of Hand Picking Roselle**

Along the banks of the Likabon Stream (see Map 2), especially in the months of May and November, the scarlet roselle fruits are particularly eye-catching against the background of the jade green mountains on the opposite side of the stream. According to the current law of water conservancy in Taiwan, the land as such is not allowed to grow perennial plants like betel trees otherwise the residents will be fined. In order to avoid the foreseeable legal penalties, the landholders in Taromak usually grow roselle because it only takes five months to ripen, which means that the investors can make money in no time. To collect money or wages in a short period of time is one crucial criterion for the Rukai in taking one job instead of another. The



preferred way of collecting wages is consonant with the piece rate system: by handing in the product of their work, the workers receive their wages immediately.

As one of the widely grown cash crops in Taitung, roselle hand picked in Taromak is sold to the merchants in the township of Gin-feng, whose major residents are Paiwan, who are another Austronesian-speaking people, and which is striving to make the roselle agribusiness a main source of cash. The Taitung County government also offers low-interest loans or subsidies for entrepreneurs in the roselle agribusiness. The range of roselle products includes candied roselle, dried roselle for making herb tea and roselle pastry.

#### *Cash-cropping as kinship practice*

At the end of November 2004, I followed my foster mother to hand pick roselle along with several elderly women and unemployed middle-aged men for one week. The middleman was Pa'wla, who is the eldest son of my foster mother's second brother, and whose wife is the sister of a Paiwan merchant in the roselle agribusiness of the village Karooran (see Map 2). The foreman was his younger brother, Taningaw. Workers set out to do the tasks in groups: Tina Cumaliya and her neighbour Tina Tayinga formed a group; a little girl, Sinyo, worked with her father; several couples worked in collaboration; the foreman and his wife; and finally, my foster mother, her elder sister, Tina Lumala'ai, her younger brother Tama Mocai, her eldest brother's son Amaleici and I.

In the beginning, everyone was informed of the basis of the wage calculation: the merchant bought the seeded roselle at a price of twenty-seven NT dollars for one kilogram, from which the middleman was entitled to take a commission of two dollars per kilogram. This means that the 'boss' (*taok'ei*) Katabanga sold the seeded roselle at a price of twenty-five dollars for one kilogram. However, the boss announced to all that the wage for the entire produce of roselle before seeding, or raw material, was fifteen dollars per kilogram, and ten dollars for the seeded roselle, or the final product. This means that the boss takes the task of removing whole roselle and that of seeding roselle as two distinct pieces of task, and thus he should pay for both of them; indeed, in the eyes of the merchant, both of them constitute one single piece of work. Workers took this as a well-paid job, since one could collect wages either by handing in raw materials or the final product. In the workers' understanding, if one finished both stages of work, that is, hand picking and seeding, one worker could be paid twice.

Men in every group were responsible for cutting the stems with roselle fruits because this task took more physical strength, but women also provided some help or



sometimes they did this task alternately (see Plate 5.1). Those responsible for taking the roselle fruits off the stems just sat on low stools or on the field, and held a pair of gardening scissors to remove fruits. The only technique for this job was to discriminate the good from the bad or rotten ones, and even a child could manage it.

During the work process, I found that the pace of my work lagged behind that of the others in my group, though I have tried my best to speed up my pace of work. Compared to my tense concentration on cutting off the roselle fruits, my companions continuously made jokes one after another, or made complaints about their kin while their hands worked at an amazing speed, as if it were part of their bodily disposition. Listening to music from cassette tapes, Tina Lumala'ai and my foster mother from time to time left their seats to dance for a short while, and the other two joined them to have fun.

When I went to Tina Cumaliya's zone of work to take a break, I found that she was listening to a radio programme, and then I suddenly realised that I had worked for three hours without moving my body. There was no one in my group who ever mentioned how long we had worked, for this was a piece-rated job and workers just worked according to their pace. Chatting with me over betel nuts, she kept on removing roselle fruits at a constant speed, which meant that my presence did not slow down her pace of work.

At midday we had noodles from a food stand for lunch because other members of our houses were either at work or at school. My foster mother just teased, 'Well, maybe this bowl of noodles will cost my wage for today. Later we will have to use our own money for alcohol'. Tina Lumala'ai mentioned that the previous day someone had borrowed money from her so that she felt her wage for today seemed to have been taken in advance by that man. She then recalled that when she followed her elder brother to work, they used to cook pork, rice, and vegetables as well as preparing drinks for lunch. On seeing their opulent food, their Taiwanese foreman had warned them that it was impossible for them to save money.

After a while, the owner of the roselle fields came to have a look at how the work with roselle was going before he went off to his job. He was a member of the staff in charge of the recycling scheme in the Administration Centre of Bei-nan Township in Taiping (see Map 2), which is a permanent position. Being a resident in Taromak, Katabanga is a kinsman of one of the roselle workers, Tina Cumaliya, whose daughter is his sister-in-law. More than this, the origin of his house was founded in the old settlement Kapaliwa before Japanese colonisation, and this indicates that the boss is profoundly connected with all the roselle workers due to the prevalence of intermarriage in the village. In June 2004 he started to grow roselle,



Plate 5.1 A couple working with roselle

although his salary can provide him with an above-average lifestyle in Taronak. Proud of his job with a decent monthly wage, he considered cash-cropping as the obligation of his inheritance of land from his forebears:

To grow crops is a painstaking task: I have to use chemical weedkillers, and I have to hire workers to hand pick the crops. The income from crops cannot even cover the wages that I pay to workers. I know very well that it is almost impossible for me to make lots of money from this. I grow them only because this land has been passed to me from my ancestors. If it is full of weeds, I will be criticised. I have to take care of it.

What drives an employer to go into cash-cropping, as he explained to me, is more to do with kinship than the cash-nexus. It seems that a plot of land from ancestors needs as much care and attention as a house. Hence land is at once an inheritance implicative of kinship obligation and capital for profit—though cash-cropping is said to be painstaking and not lucrative. In other words, both the binding kinship relation and (anticipated) criticisms from villagers come into play with respect to the originating cause for economic activities.

After exchanging words with every worker, the boss joined our group because he was on good term with Tama Mocai and Amaleici. He took a plastic cup to have some alcohol from our foodstuffs, and then Tina Lumala'ai said jokingly, 'It is quite improper (*malris'iyi*) for a boss not to bring gifts (*acebe*) to cheer us up. How dare you drink our alcohol? That's too bad'. On hearing this, Katabanga took out one hundred NT dollars to give to Amaleici to buy alcohol and drinks for us. For the Rukai, the boss, *taok'ei* refers to the one who pays them wages, and who should bring food and drinks as the gift of *acebe* to cheer workers up. The term *taok'ei*, a loan word from Taiwanese, originally means the head of a house and then extends to the one in charge of a business or even a landlord (Shieh 2003). It is understandable that a boss is bound up with wage payments, but it is quite intriguing to identify the practice of giving gifts as part of an employer's obligation. Let me spell out what the gift, *acebe*, connotes in Taronak.

In terms of occasions for gift-giving, the gift of *acebe*—different from both gifts for condolence or celebration (*lrobolr'obo*, gifts for funerals or wedding), and from gifts for a baby's one month's celebration (*ong'olre*) as shown in Chapter 4—mainly refers to gifts brought from visitors and members of a house or kin who come from somewhere outside the village. After the Rukai went into wage labour, the gift of *acebe* was in turn extended to foodstuffs or other gifts from kin or an employer. This practice of 'bringing *acebe*' (*sa-acac'ebe*) is different from the practice of 'giving to

share' (*b'ay*) in their daily life, such as giving home-grown grain or greens to the houses of kin. Interestingly, 'giving to share' and 'bringing *acebe*' are two practices of giving without reckoning or expecting the possibility of reciprocation. These two practices are more about people's (assumed) obligation to give in the everyday, though in different contexts.

In addition, the gift of *acebe* provided by outside visitors is thought to pacify ancestral spirits in the village because they are foreign to the ancestors. In this sense, *acebe* is thought of as an expression of 'being polite' (*mai'yi' yinw*) in the sense that visitors do not offend or frighten ancestral spirits by their appearance. At another level, people of Taromak expect kin who travel elsewhere to bring them some gifts, in addition to consumable novelties or exotic delicacies, as the expression of their ongoing thoughts of kin at home, and this is indispensable to making relatedness in Taromak.

In a while, Tina Limava, the wife of the eldest son of my foster mother's mother's brother, brought some red-bean pancakes as gifts to cheer us up. Bringing drinks or snacks to visit kin who are at work is not obligatory, but most Rukai would do so. In other daily situations, those working at home or in the garden often asked, in a jokingly spontaneous manner, their friends or kin who came to say greetings to them whether or not there were gifts for them. This is particularly true of those who are thought to be powerful, such as government clerks, or better off.

During the course of the work, the foreman came to tell us where to collect more sacks for roselle. At his approach, Amaleici warned us in a satirical way, 'Hey you! Be careful! Here comes the foreman! Work harder and faster, otherwise your wages will be reduced'! All the others just laughed at this. In the piece rate system, the presence of either the boss or the foreman had little relevance to people's wages, and Amaleici's spontaneously satirical comment on the role of a foreman reminded me of his previous experience of working in a company adopting the time rate system in which a foreman was set up for surveillance over workers.

It was not dusk yet, but I saw Tina Cumaliya and Tina Tayinga carry their sacks to the foreman to be weighed. Tina Tayinga waved her hand to us and jokingly said that she had earned 5,000 dollars so that she could leave for her house now. 'Did you hear the sound *talikao*?' my foster mother suddenly asked me at that time, but I heard nothing because there was the sound of talking around us. Listening carefully, I heard a very soft birdsong *talikao* from the mountain across the stream. When the bird sang *talikao* in the afternoon, it was time for people who work in the fields to return to their houses. I then saw that people from other groups started to tidy up and tie up their sacks one after another, and finally only the people in my group carried on



working till dusk. The men in my group were responsible for carrying the sacks to the foreman to weigh, whilst the women tidied up our sickles, scissors, aprons, working gloves, and buckets. While waiting for our daily wage slips, I witnessed what I had been told by other veteran workers with respect to the process by which they came to understand how a wage is conceived as walking from the fruit of their work in cash-cropping as indicated in Chapter 4: weighing the sacks, writing down the figures of the weight, the total amount of daily wages, and the foreman's signature on the slip.

Being asked about the reason for taking this job while in the queue for weighing roselle, Tama Mocai said that it was always good to make more money. Tina Lumala'ai said that she liked to work with others. She was used to working for many years. Without work, she would feel bored at home. My foster mother noted that she came to help Pa'wla, the middleman in roselle, with his work. 'We came here to work as if we played. I do not have to worry about the wage. It does not matter even if the wage is low. We have fun at work'. Tina Lumala'ai joined in by saying that it was 'just like the time when we grew millet, sweet potatoes, and lemon grass. We worked merrily at that time'. That is, mutuality, help and having a good time at work are critical to the constructs of work on a piece-rate basis and central to the making of relations of production in Taromak, to which I return below.

#### *Mutuality and a sense of exploitation*

More than that, the thought of working for kin at lower wages implies that there is a yardstick for what is called a just wage. In Taromak, it is to equate a working day with an imagined wage. Many Rukai people spontaneously identify a day with their imagined daily wage, which I discuss in Chapter 7. Even when this is a piece-rate job, this imagined daily wage offers a yardstick for a just payment. They take this to judge whether or not they are underpaid. The imagined benchmark for daily wages is built on information about wage payments from members of their houses or kin in different jobs, especially those on a building site. For example, an adult man on a building site is paid, on average, 1,200 NT dollars a day while a licensed worker (a carpenter or electrician) is paid 1,500 dollars, and a female worker is paid 1,000 dollars. In day-to-day situations, irrespective of sex, the Rukai always take the payment of 1,000 dollars a day to be the benchmark of an imagined daily wage.

On our way home, my foster mother massaged my palm, which was stiff because it had remained in the same position for too long. I asked her why she never had a stiff palm, and she replied that her hands 'have been used to' (*twa lra'onga*) working for years. At dinner, I told Amaleici that both my eyes and nose, irritated by

the nap on the roselle, kept on producing tears and watering during work. Nodding at my experience, he said that he tried not to wipe them in order to have more time to work on the roselle.

After dinner, some workers went to the boss's house to deseed roselle. Working in the yard of the boss's house, the workers deseeded roselle over alcohol and betel nuts, which were the gift of *acebe* prepared by the boss. Mistaking raw materials (whole roselle before seeding) for the final product (roselle after seeding), the boss found that, in the light of his previous calculation, the income from roselle was far less than the wages that he should pay to workers. Realising that, he immediately altered the basis for the wage calculation. The latest one was that the boss would pay workers twelve dollars for one kilogram of seeded roselle, whilst the boss sold it to the merchant at a price of twenty-five dollars per kilogram. That is, almost half of the boss's income went to the workers. Comparatively, this hardly takes place in the piece rate system amongst the Han-Chinese in Taiwan, and about one-third of an employer's total income is used for wage payment. The way Rukai employer practises wage payment is possibly taken to be the loss of money in the eyes of Taiwanese employers (G.-S. Shieh, personal communication). I later return to the implication of this unique way of wage payment when it comes to the division of wages.

Meanwhile, the latest wage calculation also meant that the slips issued in the afternoon were useless, which infuriated some workers. In spite of the employer's miscalculation, workers felt that they were cheated since the boss took away what they deserved, that is, they felt exploited. 'I want what I was told I would have. It is unfair to receive less money for now', said a male worker distressfully after alcohol. Besides, Gayanga, who is in his fifties, furiously denounced the boss as a mean person for reducing their wages, and said that made him very pitiable (*matiya kolro*). Being pitiable denotes extremely dire conditions of life. During my fieldwork, I found that many Rukai people often spontaneously described themselves as pitiable, especially when they confronted employers or power-holders. They believe that such a portrait of their condition of life is likely to make the superior have 'a soft heart' (*malo'ei kitemet'eme*), which I discuss in detail in Chapter 7. In turn, it is thought that the superiors would provide them with more resources than what was initially offered or promised.

In the dispute, Tama Mocal and Amaleici took on the job of persuading the workers to accept this new deal due to their friendship with the boss. 'We cannot make the boss lose his money', Amaleici said in a cogent tone, 'The merchant of Karooran gives the boss 25 dollars for one kilogram. It is good enough for us to have

12 dollars [per kilogram]. Besides, thanks to the boss, we have jobs to do today'. These words to some extent calmed down the furious workers, though some still muttered and showed displeasure.

To my surprise, hardly anyone commented on the issue of the middleman's commission. 'He is skilful (*malrik'ilri*) to have a kin-merchant, and he takes his deserved share (*tro'ole*)', said a male worker after the hand picking of the roselle had finished. Being *marlik'ilri* describes a person who is clever in learning knowledge and skills, and at the same time, it implies that a person is cunning in social intercourse as well. That is, being both skilful and cunning enables the middleman to gain money through the employment of kin relatedness, either from his father's side (workers) or his wife's side (the Paiwan merchant). Moreover, given that kin-workers summon kinship morality to explain their acceptance of wage labour at lower wages, the middleman is spared from criticism for taking a commission, part of the produce of the workers.

In other words, in the context of Taromak, to harness relatedness as a means for making money is conceived to be the manifestation of one's skilfulness, and it paradoxically causes little moral reprimand when kin-workers cloak his act under reciprocity. As Sahlins states, the idiom of reciprocity often becomes 'the indigenous category of exploitation' (1972: 134). In the Rukai context, I would like to add that the exploited ones who penetrate (Willis 1977) the fact of underpayment come to accentuate the salience of kinship mutuality in the economic process that simultaneously facilitates and disguises the working of reciprocity/mutuality as an act of exploitation.

#### *Piece work and time rate work: a relational construct*

The following day, we set out to deseed roselle as the boss required, while some other workers continued to gather roselle fruits in the fields (see Plate 5.2). We worked in a circle in front of Tina Lumala'ai house because it was quite near to the boss' house so that it was easier for men to carry sacks back and forth, thus we could earn more wages. When I turned up with betel nuts and drinks that morning, Alingy'ing—the eldest daughter of Tina Lumala'ai who had come to help her mother after her shift work—raised her voice to tease me, 'Here comes our *boss*! She brings the *acebe* to cheer us up!' During the work, Tama Mocai and my foster mother left their seats for a short while to deal with respective personal affairs, and Alingy'ing made jokes that their absence should incur the fine of twenty-minute's wages, irrespective of the fact that she is junior to both of them. On hearing her words, my foster mother answered back, 'Ael'es (my Rukai name) was working when I left.



Plate 5.2 A group of relatives deseeding the roselle fruit



What she has done can make up for what I failed to do during my absence'. Like several middle-aged and even elderly Rukai women, Alingy'ing works as a care giver in a privately owned hospital. In the hospital where she works, one working day consists of three shifts, and all the workers have to take turns on the different shifts. She is required to be punctual for work otherwise her co-workers or supervisors would complain or even blame her for tardiness. Since labour time is directly translated into a wage, work needs to be overseen to ensure that a worker is not loafing around. This accounts for her employing idioms peculiar to timework to make fun of us, doing piece work characterised by flexible labour time.

On the other hand, my foster mother's response conveys interesting messages. She thinks of herself as a piece rate worker so she deploys the expression of making up the workload due to her absence to avoid the imagined fines. Given that it is the totality of produce that has to do with one's wage in the piece work system, her inclusion of my labour as part of hers seems to imply that relatedness subsumes the contribution of individual members into joint efforts. In the timework system, by contrast, the only way to make up the loss of workload due to one's absence from work is to prolong the labour time, and no one can substitute for another to take on the job. This implies that every wage worker is an individuated entity responsible for his/her own work only. Taken together, the contrasting manner of construing the work process is bound up with the respective experiences of different modes of wage payment in the capitalist economy. More than that, spontaneous deployment of different idioms indicative of capitalism implies that workers are profoundly engaged in wage labour and thus adopt these idioms as part of their daily usage.

In the afternoon, Tina Limava came to visit us again after her morning shift work in a hotel in Katipul. Soon after starting to deseed roselle, she asked my foster mother, '*Nalri* ['a female friend', but very often used amongst female kin]! How shall I be paid?' My foster mother just laughed and said, 'Your work is "on a piece rate" (*wasiyi*, 'counting by pieces')! It depends on how much you work. We are different. We are wage workers'. Of course Tina Limava simply came to help and did not be paid a wage in the end. In their joking, doing piece rate work is construed and imagined as doing time rate one. This association has to do with the duration that a worker stays on a job. We conducted work in roselle from the start to the finish, whilst Tina Limava comes to work for one afternoon. In this sense, it is the difference of the workload (doing the entirety of a task or part of it), rather than the basis of wage calculation (according to a piece of work or a working day), that is taken to be the decisive factor to distinguish a piece rate worker from a wage worker. That is, in the work process, the idioms and categories from capitalism such as a

piece rate worker, a wage worker, and wage payments seem to intersect with, or even overlay, the practice of help amongst kin. On the other hand, that the Rukai jokingly construe and alter the original signification of these capitalist categories based on their lived experience, further comes to collapse the monolithic categorisation of the capitalist economy.

The significance of turning a piece rate worker into a wage worker is connected with the social ranking of different categories of workers in the Rukai context. This social distinction has its historical precedents. During Japanese colonisation, the payment of 'a monthly salary' (*kaniyo*) came into being in the wake of the setting-up of governmental clerks or policemen at local policing stations (SART 1926). At that time, several Rukai men who were better educated than the other villagers took part in and passed exams for positions that were paid monthly to their office. What underlies the higher social ranking of a wage worker over a piece rate worker is that Rukai elders often considered that only those who were both well-educated and know how to write, or the literate, are qualified for a job with a monthly salary, that is to say, as a wage worker, and a governmental position in particular. Given the poor education of most villagers, a job with a monthly salary turned out to be an impossibility most of them. Exactly the same is true for the contemporary situation. Put another way, the distinction between a wage worker and a piece rate worker, in association with their colonial experience, brings forth the bourgeoning of social classes in line with different modes of wage payment. It also implies that literacy takes part in the formation of different classes amongst villagers.

However, the hierarchical relation between a wage worker and a piece rate worker is not always identical with people's preferences when they seek jobs in real life. Instead, some Rukai people in their forties came to the view that a job with a monthly salary is sometimes troublesome, based on the fact that there are always the occasions of weddings and funerals and other familial affairs awaiting them. To ask for absence from work for the sake of the above occasions means the deduction of a portion of their wage, which is often lamented by many Rukai. 'I feel like doing piece work because it allows me to attend the weddings and funerals of my kin', said Dalrai, who is in her forties. Though being more inclined to possess or seek a job with a monthly salary, Rukai men express that, when they age, a job with flexible labour time is much preferred based on similar reasons to those of some women. Seen from this perspective, people's liking for or preference for piece rate work tasks—albeit socially inferior to jobs with monthly salaries—express the pre-eminence of kin relatedness which surpasses the hierarchical relation based on their formulation of wage labour of different types. Equally important, that Rukai

men prefer a job with a steady income in their middle age, whilst a job with flexible labour time in old age is associated with the making of maleness at different stages of the life course. For middle-aged men, to do a job with a decent wage is seen as an expression of maleness as the head of a house, whereas older men are unburdened of such a duty, as shown in Chapter 2 and discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

*Deserved share (tro'ole)*

On the day for collecting wages, many workers gathered in the yard of the employer's house, and did the sweeping while waiting for the arrival of the Paiwan merchant. The middleman and the foreman were also present shortly afterwards. The boss then dragged a big plastic bag out of his house, and poured out waterproof boots onto the ground. In order to express his gratitude for the workers' help, the boss announced that every worker could have a pair of boots. Walking up to the piles of boots, workers tried boots on one after another, and some even just put on new boots and threw away their ragged slippers.

Aside from a wage, betel nuts, and alcohol, the employer lives up to the expectation of giving extra gifts like boots as the expression of his gratitude to workers. This is also seen as generosity (*mathiathinalre*) to the recipients. The practice of offering gifts (*acebe*) as such keeps the employers free from the criticism of being a person who only demands that the workers labour for him without recognition of their help, which harks back to the point made earlier that the salience of the provision of gifts rests in its capacity to transfigure the mild coercion of the one who invites or hires people to work. In this case, the practice of giving gifts to the worker consequently comes to make wage labour an act of help, thereby relations of production take on the form of kin relatedness.

After the merchant's truck came to a stop, the workers carried the sacks to be weighed, and the middleman was responsible for noting down the weight of the produce; then workers collaborated to move all the sacks onto the back of the truck till all of them were securely loaded. The middleman gave the total amount to the Paiwan merchant, who is the elder sister of the middleman's wife, and she took out a calculator to add it up. Receiving the total amount of money from the merchant, the middleman immediately took away his commission and then handed the rest to the boss. The boss made the foreman check everyone's slip, and then workers queued to collect wages from the boss. For those who had stayed at home for other jobs, the boss made Amaleici take the wages to their houses on his behalf.

After collecting the wages, I was struck by how the collective wage was divided in my group: the total amount was equally allocated to my foster mother, her sister



(Tina Lumala'ai), her brother (Tama Mocai) and her nephew (Amaleilci). Since the daily produce is written on the slip, I presume, it is possible to recognise each participant's contribution on a daily basis and to calculate a daily wage for Alingy'ing, who came to work for one day. By the logic of the piece rate system, every participant is entitled to his/her share of a collective wage indicative of his/her contribution. Or, given that garden produce is regarded as the embodiment of human efforts, as indicated in Chapter 3, presumably someone could put forward the division of earnings based on individual contributions, or at least someone might give a word of suggestion. However my reasoning obviously does not hold for the Rukai.

Notably, the share to which a house is entitled is called its 'deserved share' (*tro'ole*). It means that each participant house, regardless of the number of members taking part in the work, is deemed to be equal in the sense that a collective wage is equally divided.<sup>1</sup> As for those who took part in the work (Tina Limava, Alingy'ing and I), their efforts are in turn taken to increase the total amount of roselle (and then of the collective wage) rather than increasing the produce of our individual house. Put differently, expressed in the idiom of mutual help, an individual contribution to the increase of produce/wages is in effect submerged in the image of the collectivity of houses, and then flows into the 'deserved share' of each participant house. Despite the fact that the difference of individual abilities in work is well recognised, as shown in Chapter 3, in cooperative labour one who is good at work is expected to avoid expressing the view that he/she is entitled to gain more than others, as this is morally disapproved of. Thus, I suggest that working together, far more than implying competition amongst individuals, means more that the equal value of each participant is achieved by the provision of help from the abler to the less able. However, I am not suggesting that the value of a person in terms of one's effort in work is understood in cash terms without recognition of its suggestion of the ideology of individuality inherent in the capitalist economy. This is related to how the effort of each worker is recognised. To elucidate this question, let us consider a case in which Rukai people divide the produce of crops through cooperation.

In the case of payments in kind in cooperative labour, co-workers also divide the produce equally, but disputes about the share of harvest do occur. For instance, a couple of years ago Tina Misala gathered several female friends to grow sweet potatoes and taro for her. As usual, they divided the produce by number as

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<sup>1</sup> When it comes to the case of agricultural labour, workers sometimes would dispute over the share of garden produce that one is entitled to. In such a case, other members in the group are inclined to swap their share for harmony's sake.



everyone's deserved share. However, one co-worker complained that her share of sweet potatoes was smaller, and Tina Misala gave her own in exchange for her friend's because she thought each bag of sweet potatoes was almost identical. Thus the dispute was settled through the swapping, even though the number of sweet potatoes in the two bags was the same. By implication, if one feels that one does not get a near or equal share with other co-workers, one is entitled to demand more to get a deserved share. In the case of payments in cash, by contrast, a deserved share of earnings is equal in numerical calculation. In this sense, the wage form of efforts in work is redolent of the image of commodity fetishism (Marx 1976[1867]) in that a wage seems to become *the* form to measure and represent human labour in a local context. However, I indicate rather that, if human efforts invested in production are taken into account with respect to the creation of value, as David Graeber (2001) shows, then this numerical representation of economic value amongst the Rukai speaks not only of the formation of equivalence in the capitalist economy, but also of how the recognition of the value of a person's economic effort is actualised in the form available to the Rukai.

What is more, how the Rukai divide collective earnings reminds us of how Malay fishermen divide their earnings. In his report on how the boat owner and his crew divide their earnings from fishing, Raymond Firth (1947) notes how the boat owner is entitled to three shares: one for the boat, one for his skill of diving, and one for himself as a crew-member. Furthermore, in the portion for all the crew-members, all participants are equally given a share irrespective of differences in individual skill. In other words, in spite of the capital that the owner invests in the boat and equipment, all the crew-members, including the owner himself, are equal in terms of their share, whereas the hierarchical relationship between them occurs at the level of the acknowledgement of the investment of monetary capital

Let us consider the case of the lowland Philippines to see how the morality of economic practices is achieved through the idiom of emotion on the part of the poor. Fenella Cannell indicates that people in several lowland communities (e.g., the Igbo, Central Luzon, and the Visayas, Cannell 1999: 231-3) similarly share the view that irrespective of the investment of monetary capital, the economically deprived employ an appeal to pity to fellow workers to request a near or equal share in the product of work (fish or rice) for the sake of providing their families. That is, the recognition of the labour of all participant workers, especially the powerless, implies that they could be 'persons of equal value although not of equal power' (Kerkvliet 1990: 269, cited in Cannell 1999: 233). In the Rukai case, it is each house, represented by its members, that stands equal to each other in terms of the value of its existence.

However, the recognition of the equal value of a house demands the submergence of additional individuals' contribution under the working of mutual help based on kinship. Put differently, relatedness between each participant house overrides the numerical calculation of individual contributions insofar as how the produce should be distributed for the sake of domestic reproduction.

Let us return to how an employer divides the produce. As mentioned earlier, the employer's decision to subtract almost half of his income as the workers' wages—reminiscent of how the host and sharecropper divide rice produce in rural Java (Stoler 1977a)—could be understood as that he acknowledges that the collectivity of workers makes as much of a contribution to the income as he does. Put differently, it is his land, his work of weeding and watering during the growth of roselle that produce the value, whereas the workers' contribution comes from the investment of physical efforts.

Finally, the total wage for each house of our group was about 2,000 NT dollars for one week's work, and according to their imagined daily wage, each house was really underpaid. But no one in my group made any complaints. However, one day I found that my foster mother was making candied roselle at home. I was curious about where the roselle was from, and she said that she and her sister had hidden some in their buckets when we removed them the other day. That evening, we took home-made candied roselle to Tina Lumala'ai's house, and shared it with kin who came to chat as happened every evening. This reminds me of when I visited my foster mother six years ago, and she and her female kin was deseeding roselle in the courtyard. Before I left, she insisted that I should accept some dried roselle as a gift (*acebe*) to my birth mother or kin. I knew that it was part of the produce that she would hand in to the boss the following day, but she claimed that she was entitled to give it to me because she has worked on it.

These episodes entail two issues. Firstly, they are concerned with the fact that for the Rukai a worker is the one to whom the product of work belongs, as shown in Chapter 3. The act of petty theft seems to be similar to acts indicative of negative reciprocity (Sahlins 1972; cf. Narotzky & Moreno 2002). From the above case and other anecdotes with respect to how Rukai piece rate workers made use of tactics to increase the weight of produce, such as putting pebbles into the sacks of rice or fungus, I would suggest that the relation between a worker and produce is central to make sense of these acts of pilfering. Secondly, similar to the Malay peasants observed by James Scott (1985), the Rukai also deploy small, everyday practices such as pilfering or embezzlement of the produce to attest to the relation between a worker and the produce.

This discussion inevitably leads to the issue of the moral economy and everyday resistance. Here I focus on the working of gentle violence and hegemony with respect to the moral economy and reciprocity, and leave the issue of resistance to Chapter 8 where it involves different conceptions of personhood, power, and agency. Contending with the view that giving from above serves as a disguise for gentle violence (Bourdieu 1977, 1990, 1999), James Scott argues that giving from the above must be accompanied by the reciprocal manipulation of the symbols of euphemisation, such as gifts, language or etiquette, from the bottom whence hegemony comes into being (Scott 1985: 309). In this sense, Scott's thesis singles out the agency of the weak when they face powerful others, whereas Bourdieu's thesis stresses the making of ideology based on existing cultural values, such as kinship morality and the use of gifts, as well as the disguising capacity of ideology which presents itself as self-evident to people.

In the Rukai case, it is apparent that an employer's provision of gifts in various contexts can be viewed as the working of euphemisation. Meanwhile, the working of reciprocity does give rise to the effect of ideology in which kin-workers attest to the self-evident nature of mutuality/reciprocity. It should be borne in mind that Rukai workers penetrate the fact of underpayment and remain aware of the asymmetry in power in the economic process when they describe themselves as pitiable in a wage dispute. I call into question whether Rukai expressions as such can be interpreted as meaning that they are aware of the intention of their actions as Scott argues. His overemphasis on the intentionality of the weak implies a mechanistic connection between personhood and action. Conversely, it is suggested that the spontaneity inherent in their actions might give another dimension to our understanding of their complexity.

Nonetheless, in line with the idea that the appearance of the petty theft reveals the 'core of "folk" concepts of exploitation' (Scott 1985: 187), I would suggest that similar acts in the Rukai context in effect hinge upon how the relation between a worker and the produce is conceived. For Rukai workers, the relation is established by reference to *from whose efforts* the fruit of labour is produced, rather than from whose land the produce grows. This originates from the fact that the product of work is regarded as the embodiment of human effort in the context of Taromak, as indicated in Chapters 2 and 3. This is where the sense of exploitation comes from, though it seems not to be diminished by the self-evident nature of reciprocity or the working of gentle violence.



## Conviviality and Domestic Sociality at Work

As noted, hand picking roselle is thought of as working merrily owing to the fact that people work in the company of kin whence they create a cheerful ambience in the capitalistic economy. Working with companions is thought to make work never dull or boring, and that is why many Rukai people often implicitly revealed their reluctance to work all alone. When two young Rukai women went to the job centre, for instance, they told the clerk that they wanted to work in the same workplace, though they possessed different technical skills. After being informed of the result whereby they were assigned to different workplaces, both of them rejected the offer since they did not want to work separately.

By contrast, men do not explicitly show any preference to work with their own companions, but this does not imply the insignificance of companions on their part. Quite the reverse: when men work in a factory or on a building site, for example, very often they buy alcohol to visit other male workers from Taromak, even though they work in different workplaces. In addition, men who work in the cities often introduce men from Taromak to work with them as long as there are vacancies in their workplaces. In so doing, it is easier for them to help each other and also to chat over alcohol together after work. To have a drink with male companions, as Monggo, a man in his late forties said, is 'the best thing to do after a tiring day of work. Even the exchange of words is not very intensive, we know each other's mind well at the moment of drinking alcohol'. To have companions is to share emotions and be supportive. This is made clear when we come to the issue in the following chapter of how Rukai people construe the importance of their peers in their decisions about doing manual jobs.

Moreover, work with companions is synonymous with play. Whenever my foster mother, alongside other women in their fifties or above, go to their fields to work, they always say that they are not really doing work, as we have seen in Chapter 2. 'It is more like play (*kivavang*). My body is used to working in the fields', Tina 'Elre'eva remarked while we had a break from reaping millet in front of her work hut. She continued, 'Everyday I go to my gardens after I finish the domestic chores. I don't need to work for money now. I am aged. I work in my fields as if I played. I don't work hastily. I receive no wage from work. I have fun in garden work'. Much the same is for labour exchange amongst kin. As the late Momo Gelele (*momo*, the term of reference for ego's grandfather and men of his generation) recalled, to conduct labour exchange in the past (before the 1960s) was more like play in the fields because they always played jokes on each other and never felt tired



from work.

The enjoyment of fun and laughter in work in the Rukai case is different from the view of the separation of laughter from work, or the opposition of work and play (alongside other activities in regards to it), which is deeply rooted in Christianity, and in Calvinism in particular (Overing 2000; Passes 2000). It is in the playfulness of work, I suggest, that closeness and intimacy are created, and conviviality as such in turn obliterates the difference in individual abilities amongst co-workers. For the Rukai, a practice of work takes on the meaning of conviviality, that is, 'having a good time in the company of others' (Overing & Passes 2000: xiii). However, I suggest that the significance of conviviality in Taromak slightly differs from the depiction offered by Joanna Overing and Alan Passes.

Similarly to native Amazonians, the Rukai put great emphasis on the aesthetic aspects of daily life, such as culinary art, practices of care and loving, and the expression of jealousy, to which Overing and Passes refer as the expression of leading a shared life, that is, conviviality in the Amazonian context (2000: xiii). However, making sense of the aesthetics of daily life or conviviality in the Rukai context demands taking into consideration the relation between company, emotions, and relatedness. Significantly, unlike the Amazonian case, for the Rukai it is not autonomous individuals who conduct work, labour exchange, acts of care, loving or hating to create a collectivity. Rather, much weight is given to the importance of the company with kin in regards to how sociality is created. Let me spell it out. In Taromak, it is much emphasised that on the occasions of weddings or of mourning, the practice that kinspersons are obliged to carry out is to be present at the house of kin to share their happiness or grief. This is the practice of *mwa lraw'elrang*, which I translate as 'to have company with kin'. Notably, to avoid the *mwa lraw'elrang* in the event of a death is unthinkable to the Rukai, whereas the idea of working for pay once occurred to a few villagers—though it was not put into practice—when it came to attendance at weddings, as described in Chapter 6.

For the Rukai, to keep the bereaved company is heavily emphasised due to the fact that the bereaved house is temporarily socially disconnected in terms of staying inside the house of mourning, as shown in Chapter 3. Even after the burial, what the bereaved can do is only to work (garden work and wage labour), and they are indeed denied active participation in interactions with kin during the first month of the burial. From the fourth day after a burial, the kin of the bereaved perform the practice of *a kivavang*, 'to make [kin] play', in which kinspersons invite the bereaved members to walk out of the house of mourning to have dinner at their houses on a rotation basis noted in Chapter 3.

Based on these practices, I suggest that the salience of the company of kin is crucial to the making of conviviality on the grounds that socially isolated individuals such as the bereaved, who have been disconnected from relatedness, are capable of partaking of sociality by means of the physical presence of kin. Taken in this sense, conviviality at work in the Rukai context, as the 'aesthetics of production' (Overing 1989: 159), not only manifests their sharing the same life (Overing & Passes 2000: xiii), but also accentuates the salience of having company with kin in the creation of domestic sociality.

## Conclusion

I have attempted to show how reciprocity, wage payments, work/wage labour, and relatedness are drawn to work with each other in the process of cash cropping on the basis of a piece-rate. In the wake of the introduction of wage payments in cash cropping in lieu of labour exchange since the late 1960s, a kin-employer was thought to generously provide gifts to kin-workers so as to alleviate the mild coercion in the recruitment of kin for work.

In contemporary situations, relatedness works as an originating cause for cash cropping, and is still bound up with labour recruitment and the morality of work (for whom and what one works). That is, kin relatedness becomes internal to the making of relations of production insofar as kin-workers regard their labour for kin as a practice of mutuality and help. Given the predominance of kinship morality, the request for a fair return for labour turns out to be unthinkable to kin-workers, and such practices are conducive to exploitation.

When it comes to wage disputes, however, a worker's self-portrait as a pitiable person makes the power difference between kin-employers and kin-workers more acute, thereby their sense of exploitation becoming acute. I argued that the sporadic appearance of acts of 'petty theft' or embezzlement can be interpreted as acts of resistance in that workers conceive of labour as the embodiment of their efforts, whence they are free to dispose of it. By contrast, the commission to a kin-middleman as a deserved share due to the fact that this middleman is conceived of as being socially clever and cunning in networking people for work, as well as in having a merchant as kin. Despite the fact that kin-workers penetrate the fact of underpayment according to their past experience, they take the jobs in recognition of the morality of mutual help. In this case, relatedness becomes a kind of capital for monetary gain, but is paradoxically backed up by kinship morality.

Moreover, the concern of domestic reproduction is made evident in the division of collective earnings. Each participant house is given an equal share of earnings as what they deserve, irrespective of the number of members from each house taking part in the work. By implication, each participant house is of equal value in cooperative labour, whereas additional members from individual houses contribute to the increase of the total amount of produce. With help from kin, the difference of individual abilities in work is consequently smoothed over. In other words, the economy relies on relatedness to actualise and achieve the extraction of produce under the veil of kinship morality, and then succumbs to it in terms of the concern for the existence of domesticity. On the other hand, the making of relatedness in turn is profoundly entangled with economic activities.

Finally, doing tasks on a piece-rate basis is even identified as the enjoyment of conviviality with kin or companions. Indeed, conviviality emerges from working together with kin or companions, and it connotes the interminglement of work/wage labour and play in the capitalistic economy. I argued that, in the piece rate system, conviviality at work, as the manifestation of the aesthetics of production/work, is tantamount to enacting domestic sociality, taken in the sense of having a good time in the company of kin.

Aside from the above analysis, another mode of cash cropping in Taromak is on a time-rate basis, to which I shall return in the following chapter. By the comparison of different modes of cash cropping in terms of wage payments, I attempt to examine whether or not the peculiarities of wage payments make any difference in respect to their experience and constructions regarding work, wage, gifts, mutuality, and making relatedness.

## Chapter 6

### The Bitterness of a Wage

As Marx points out, in capitalistic production, the device of a working day, or labour time, provides the mechanism of rationalisation of work, and at the same time serves as the standardised form to calculate the product of labour. Based on this premise, the form of a wage comes to manifest and reify the value of labour, and thus makes the wages the equivalent to labour, which enables the employers to exert control over the workers on the shop floor in order to extract the surplus value (Marx 1976[1867]: 125-244). This view holds true for my understanding of the work process in which Rukai people participated in time-rated jobs. However, the hidden or unanswered question in his thesis is how the entire process of the workers' acceptance of labour time took place historically.

To answer this question, E. P. Thompson (1993[1967]) demonstrates the historical transformation of the workers' time consciousness through their confrontation with the time discipline on the shop floor. What remains unexplained in Thompson's point, however, is how the workers as the producers of value learn and accommodate this novel form of calculation which seems to exert magic to convert labour into money. In addition, he also leaves aside whether or not the workers' everyday practices enact alternative notions of time other than labour time, and thus the predominance of labour time demands careful scrutiny.

To address these questions, I discuss how Rukai workers construe and experience work and payments based on a time-rated system. Rukai workers bestow on their experiences under the coercion of labour time the meaning of toil, whilst a wage appears as 'bitter money'. Their view of work and a wage is indeed connected with their preceding experience of wage labour. Sent to do child labour in a factory by their parents' decision, Rukai adolescents faced parental authority via the idiom of intimacy. In some cases, to opt for manual jobs was even driven by the intimacy of companionship and then assumed the meaning of the youngsters' shared vision of the future. On the other hand, the employer often inculcated the idea that a factory is like a family to facilitate the act of pressing the workers to overwork for the sake of more produce.

In a contemporary context, a case in point is work with betel vines, in which



the employer's sensitivity to the daily output is entailed in the wage payment and which correlates to the employer's profit. That is, Rukai people to some extent accommodate to the view of time being money (Thompson (1993[1967])), especially on the part of an employer paying daily wages to the workers. This is closely associated with the ongoing investment of money in growing betel vines.

Moreover, Rukai employers even draw the distinction between employers, the haves and workers, the have-nots. Holding on to the logic of profit making and wealth accumulation, the employer does not deploy the socially recognised practice that the haves should give out the excess to care for the have-nots. Even the workers or the deprived do not think of relations of production solely in the idiom of kinship morality. In this regard, the practice of time-rated jobs is governed by the logic of pure economic (in the narrowest sense) interests. In the light of this, I indicate that the rupture between kinship and 'the economy' is laid bare.

Paradoxically, the monetary image of time is often referred to in order to safeguard what workers deserve when residents are recruited to provide compulsory collective labour (*agolri*). Similarly, from time to time, some Rukai people would show their hesitation to attend the weddings of kin at the price of a daily wage. Conversely, some others still feel obligated to do so, on the grounds that their company with kin entails their remembrance of what kin have done for them on similar occasions, and that the only equivalent is keeping kin company. In Rukai people's daily life, therefore, I suggest that the intersection and entanglement between domestic time and labour time, and between work for kin and work for pay are not uncommon, thereby neither of them gain absolute mastery to replace the other.

### **Work as Toil, Wage as 'Bitter Money'**

A great majority of the residents in Taromak applied the local term *aiso*, or money, to a wage (*sao belesa*). At first, I was inclined to think that they used *aiso* everywhere in their daily talk just because wages were always paid in money, and therefore money and a wage became undoubtedly identical, synonymous, and interchangeable. This holds true for most situations. Over time, I realised that the reason the term 'wage' is much less mentioned is because the Rukai implicitly draw a distinction between wages and money in the light of their lived experiences of wage labour. One March afternoon in 2005, for instance, I joined some middle-aged men's talk while they sat around a small table drinking alcohol, which is deemed

improper for an unmarried Rukai woman. I did so not only because of my marital status but also because two of them were kin of my foster mother's brother's house. This was an enjoyable way of drinking, as many men often told me what they did after work, and, just like other Rukai men's gatherings, it was relaxing and peppered with frivolous jokes. When I asked Matawaka, who is in his thirties, whether or not he went to 'earn wages' (*mwa belese*) along with Ginsone that day, he said that he did 'make money' (*mwla aiso*) with him. Suddenly, Ginsone, who is in his late thirties, joined in our talk and said:

'Ael'es [my Rukai name], you should ask us if we go to "make money" instead of "earning wages"! When you say that you are going to earning wages, it means you are going to do toil. You sweat, you use all your might, and you get tired out. You then get your wage. Don't say wages. It's bitter money. Say 'making money'. You don't always make money out of toil. Making money is good. Earning wages is painstaking (*kiya tolrolre*).

Another man joined us and remarked that they love to have money for rice, betel nuts, or alcohol. 'Money matters', he said, 'but work is always toilsome. Work is tiring. *Mwa belese* seems to say that our work is real toil'. In their denial as such, the identification of money and a wage is broken asunder, and the substitution of money for a wage makes them subjectively feel much more like working, albeit the objectivity of their jobs, which demand the exertion of their physical strength, still remains. In other words, the workers themselves transfigure heavy work by means of denying a wage as a wage in order to carry out their work for pay.

Why is work experienced as toil? Many Rukai men with whom I have talked were sent to do manual jobs in factories or on building sites, and the content of their work undoubtedly needs the exertion of physical strength. However, once in a while, Rukai men and women came to that their being hardworking brought them higher wages than their fellow workers. This sense of pride in manual labour, I suggest, is associated with the manifestation of their abilities, quite different from for both Britain (Willis 1977) and the United States (Ortner 2006), in which manual labour is regarded as a symbol of virility and machoness in contrast to the femininity of mental labour. This accounts for why working class children opt for manual labour as their expression of agency, yet it paradoxically leads to the reproduction of working class (Willis 1977), to which I return later.

For the Rukai, manual labour is neither gendered nor sexualised. Indeed, many Rukai elderly and middle-aged women have had experiences of manual labour

as their male counterparts since the 1970s. For instance, several couples worked on the same building sites, and the only difference is that a woman did lighter tasks of carrying bricks and tiling though a small number of women had worked with rebar as men had. Manual labour is only differentiated when it comes to the division of labour based on physical strength, as it is for garden work mentioned in Chapter 2. Even a Rukai woman could do strength-demanding work designated to a man when she has to feed house members. Hence, both ability in work and the concern with domestic sustenance underlie their sense of pride.

*The mild coercion of domestic intimacy*

Looking back into some Rukai men's life histories, however, it is clear that they set out to do the manual jobs when they were coming of age. Most of them, as I know, were made to take the jobs by their parents' decision, not out of their own free will, if there is any such thing in Taromak. Thrown into the unfamiliar environment of the workplaces whose owners were Taiwanese, they worked as apprentices on the shop floor under the supervision of the senior foremen. Though the legal code about the penalties of illegal recruitment of child labour was stipulated in the then laws of labour regulation, its efficacy seemed limited as far as the Rukai case is concerned.<sup>1</sup> These young men faced prolonged labour time on the shop floor, while they were offered scant or even no welfare from the workplaces. Taningaw, who is in his late thirties, speaks of his life in a factory:

I woke up very early in the morning to commence my job. The making of rice noodles needed a lot of physical strength and was affected by the weather. When the sky turned grey, we workers had to move all the racks for drying rice noodles into the factory... Sometimes we had to work after dinner because we young workers lived in the dormitory. That was part of my boss's house... If there was no work on Sunday, my boss would let us have one day off.

Without the intervention of the state, the under age Rukai workers were made to do their jobs under circumstances of exceedingly prolonged labour time, a common practice in Taiwanese family firms (Greenhalgh 1994; Shieh 1997). Thus Rukai men's expression that work/wage labour is toil while a wage is 'bitter money' is closely associated with their historical experience of unreasonable labour time on the shop floor, that is, a measure of exploitation.

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<sup>1</sup> I base this description on a variety of versions of labour law in different times compiled in the *Labour Law*.

Aside from that, more adolescents were sent to factories while they were still at primary school or had just graduated. Vanesa, a woman in her forties, for example, was sent to a factory when she had just graduated from primary school. Her family was in dire financial straits since her father owed debts from his failure in business. As she described,

I was made to work in a factory. I had no idea about the job. Most of my classmates [at primary school] were in similar situations. I lived in the factory dorm. It was horrible, small, and suffocating. I ate in my boss's house. So did all the child workers. We worked there, ate there, and slept there. My boss sometimes would give us coins as pocket money. I had no wage. My father took away my two years' wages. The boss gave them to him.

Much the same goes for Kasilangaw, who is in his late thirties. He even expressed his resentment about his father after drinking alcohol, which is quite uncommon in the everyday interaction amongst the Rukai. Very often, respect (*sakeng*) predominates father-son relations. Kasilangaw told me how work and daily life were inseparable in a family firm where he and his brother stayed for almost three years:

We [he and his brother] stayed in the attic of the factory... Sometimes we were allowed to go to the streets on Sunday. Not always. If the factory had lots of jobs to do, we also had no rest on Sunday... When I couldn't fall asleep at night, I would think of my father's heartless act of leaving us behind in a factory. We had no home. We worked hard but [received] no wages. My father had them. We had nothing... My friends were at school. But I worked and got tired in a factory... From time to time, I was in tears when these thoughts came into my mind.

Both cases touch upon a common point in the recruitment of child labour in Taromak in the 1970s: the employers paid the parents two years' wages and then they took the children into their family firms, part of the employers' house. For the part of Rukai parents, this offer was taken to be that children would be provided with meals and have a place to sleep. Meanwhile, the employers promised to regard the children as their 'family'. As mentioned in Chapter 2, work was, and still is, thought to be an indispensable part of Rukai people's childhood. Aside from sharing domestic work, children from a poverty-stricken house were further required to work for pay to take part in securing domestic sustenance.



Apart from that, the idiom of domestic intimacy functions in factory life, and even becomes 'ethics' for work in the sense that the workers as family should make efforts to get jobs done. Therefore, the actualisation of the prolongation of labour time on the shop floor relies on the persuasiveness of the idioms of intimacy (cf. Cairolì 1998; Greenhalgh 1994; Kondo 1990). Economic hardship, the sharing of work for the sake of a house, and the mild coercion exerted through the idiom of intimacy come to account for why (sometimes under age) Rukai children do manual jobs, and also the bitterness of wage labour and the wage paid to them. However, other Rukai adolescents at that time told me a slightly different story.

*Intimacy of labour: from companions to co-workers*

In spite of the working of coercive domestic intimacies, some Rukai residents would refer to common life experiences and intimate friendship as the binding ties which would make them share the common dream of working together, no matter what kind of job they would take. Salitak, who is in his forties, for instance, addressed how he and his companions envisioned their future while they were young:

After the summer vacation of my fifth grade [at primary school, about aged eleven], I was surprised that many chairs in my classroom became unoccupied... I was told that they were sent to the factories to make scissors or to carry bricks or cement on the building sites. Some were in Taitung, and some were in northern Taiwan. It is called 'going to the place with jobs'.<sup>2</sup> All of my companions and I dreamed that one day we could 'go to the place with jobs', like our precursors.... All my classmates lived and had grown up together in this village. We do what any others do. Every one leads a similar life here... Having a job meant that you are an adult to support your family. My mother always told me since I was very young that a man has a responsibility to feed 'the members of the house' [*tatana*, referring to people who live in the same house irrespective of biological connections]... My mother put strong emphasis on my education, and I had a diploma from senior high school [vocation school]. Most of my classmates [at primary school] were made to find a job in cities. Quite a lot [of villagers] never went to the junior high school.

The driving forces behind people opting for jobs as manual labourers not only

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<sup>2</sup> It is my own translation of *cu-shiya-hwei* into 'going to the place with jobs'. *Cu-shiya-hwei* is a loanword from Taiwanese dialect, and originally describes that a person gets a job to provide one's family. What underlies this idiom is that one can only find a job somewhere away from home.

lie in the hardship of houses, but also in the intimacies of their companions or contemporaries. In Salitak's statement, the thoughts that 'everyone leads a similar life' and 'we do what any others do' come to constitute youngsters' familial and communal life in Taronak: the unmarried, regardless of sex, tend to gather as a group, and undertake acts in public collectively, as noted in Chapter 2. To do as their precursors and companions do implies a sense of living a shared life, a form of conviviality (Overing & Passes 2000). At issue in their aspiration to a shared life in terms of working together is the salience of companionship, or indeed friends' company.

For Rukai children, companionship is established from childhood: living in the neighbourhood, studying together at primary school, and then for boys accepting the training in the men's house, or for girls working together during the collective labour exchange. Companionship amongst children and adolescents comprises the shared life experience, and at the same time makes them envision their future in terms of work in the same workplace.

At another level, to share the same dream amongst companions in terms of doing similar jobs implies that to have a job other than manual labour is unthinkable. As Tegetege told me, 'I only finished my primary school education. I am only able to do manual jobs. It enables me to earn wages for my house. I am not like you. You read a lot. You can teach. I only know how to build houses'. It is now fair to say that following what predecessors did in the past, anticipation of a shared life experience with companions, poor education, and domestic hardship together come to shape Rukai adolescents' 'sense of reality' (Bourdieu 1977: 86, 164). This sense of reality further allows, or sets limitations for, them only to expect manual jobs.

More than that, the adolescents also endeavour to maintain their long-term companionship by virtue of working together, thereby their shared sense of belonging as companions with same-sex persons is perpetuated. Basal'ewa, for instance, who is in her forties, once told me that when her friends from junior high school went to the cities of northern Taiwan to work in a factory, she suddenly felt lonely:

I felt left behind. I was the only one [amongst my female pals] to prepare for the entrance exam [for senior high school]. I did not want to. I desperately wanted to join my friends for work. So I made a plan to run away. I packed my luggage and then joined them [in a factory]... But my mother soon came to the factory...and forcefully took me back home. I was fiercely beaten afterwards.

The mother of Basal'ewa told me about the importance of education with respect to finding a good job. Back in Taronak, she continued her education and got a decent job as a pre-school teacher. After several years' work in that factory, her female intimates returned and then settled down. They still stayed very close, and often gathered together after dinner to share talk of domestic affairs over drinks and betel nuts. In addition, working with companions plays a crucial role in Rukai adolescents' imagination of their future. Once left behind due to their friends being sent to other cities, they would try to contact their friends in the factories or the building sites, and *vice versa*, to share their feelings of loneliness about working alone, and to chat about what had happened recently in the village: who got married last week, whose child found a new job, who gave birth to a baby, and what activity was going to be held the following month. Living apart, the adolescents strove to maintain friendship by means of various kinds of communication: writing letters, making phone calls, sending messages through someone visiting their friends, and so on. Losing contact with each other seems to divest them of both companionship and shared memory.

In a comparison to British working class adolescents who consider manual labour to be the enactment of masculinity (Willis 1977) as described earlier, I thus argue that the account of Rukai adolescents' doing manual jobs directs attention to the working of two kinds of domestic intimacy: that of the parent-child tie and that of companionship. With the force deriving from parental authority and alongside the view of work/wage labour as part of what children or adolescents should do for their houses, under age children are made to take manual jobs for the sake of subsistence. On the other hand, with the intimacy amongst (same-sex) peers/friends, adolescents tend to take jobs with their companions partly on the grounds that this is the only vision available for them to think about what will become of their life. What is more, on the shop floor, the idioms of familial intimacies, such as the caring role of an employer as a father and promoting the idea of a firm being like a family, are often invoked for the purpose of making the workers work harder in terms of prolonging labour time.

Let me return to how the relation between work and a wage is conceived by drawing on cases of married women.

#### *Time as money and time-in-work*

On the part of adults (women in particular), labour time is more directly confronted with the performance of domestic work. Tina Panigale, for example, mentioned that she preferred jobs like work with lemongrass, for her cleaning job in

the hotel was very hard work. What was more intolerable was when she was required to punch a time card:

I asked my *taok'ei* [boss] whether or not I had to punch the card in the morning because I had many domestic chores to do. I promised him that I would finish my routine tasks by prolonging my working hours to make up for what I missed. My boss said that he understood my situation, and also knew that I was the most hardworking amongst all the cleaning staff. But he could not permit me to do so. If he did, others would follow my example, and then all the regulations for work would be made pointless. I didn't like punching the card. Some of my co-workers were on time every day, but they were lazy and loafed around. But they were not warned by the boss. I like the work of growing lemongrass. I never worry about being late or the loss of my [daily] wage. Now I like to work in my field. I don't need to worry about time. I have no wage, but can play while working in the fields.

The demand for punctuality from the supervisor in the workplace acutely exacerbates the wedge, or the antagonistic opposition, between labour time and domestic time. What is more, labour time is unredeemable and irreversible from the perspective of the employer in the sense that all the routine tasks need to be done in the confines of work time. Even the voluntary prolongation of working hours fails to retrospectively compensate for what is missed out during one's absence from the workplace. In time-rated work, the device of labour time indeed implies the existence of the individual worker as a self-responsible person, and in turn no one can substitute for another insofar as a daily wage is paid for the period of time that a worker invests in labour rather than just the completion of tasks. To stick to clock time on the shop floor, as E. P. Thompson (1993[1967]) emphasises, equates with an employer's measure of control over the workers. That is, at issue is the compulsion of the relentless labour time, instead of the completion of a particular task, which prompts people's experience of time-rated work as toil.

In contrast, when this Rukai worker proposed that the completion of routine tasks might serve to substitute for the regulation of punctuality for work, this reveals that what concerns a Rukai worker is whether or not a piece of work is done. For example, the time for doing work in the fields starts when they have finished the domestic chores, namely, people's apprehension of the duration of time is only actualised in practices of work, which is as 'task-orientation' (Thompson (1993[1967]: 358). In the Rukai case, the duration of time is immanent in work, or it is more like 'time-in-work'.



Viewed from this perspective, a Rukai worker's complaint about rigid labour time elucidates not only the peculiarity of labour time in the time rate system, but also the enhancement of the employer's control through the device of labour time.

Taken as a whole, in their recollection regarding the reason for taking or choosing to do wage labour, intimacy and coercion come equally into play, and in some cases, intimacy could even work as a coercive force to make adolescents go into manual labour, or even as a measure of exploitation as shown in their recollection of factory life. Shared experience of harsh working conditions in a factory or similar workplace is associated with why wage labour is construed as toil whilst a wage is seen as 'bitter money'. In contrast to the case of work with lemongrass or roselle shown in Chapter 5, the other side of wage labour finds its appearance in this chapter. Why is labour time experienced and construed as so greatly different from work on a piece-rate basis shown in Chapter 5? Both the forms of wage payment and how the employer-employee relation is conceived, I suggest, seem to be central to the making of the disparate experience of wage labour. To make this point, I draw on the case of work with betel vines where the owner is Rukai, and the wage paid to the workers is on a time-rate basis.

### **Experience of Time Rate Work: The Work Process of Hand Picking Betel Pepper**

In the area bordering between Taromak and the village of Likabon (see Map 2), several huge black tents are scattered among the verdant paddy fields, and such a scene is often seen in neighbouring areas. These black tents are for betel vines, and the majority of the merchants in this cash crop are Taiwanese. The land for betel pepper leaves is privately owned, unlike that along the river banks and in the mountain, known as 'the reservations' indicated in Chapter 5. That is, land for betel vines is unmistakably an item of private property in a jural sense.

Unlike roselle, the leaves of betel vines are a kind of cash crop only, on the grounds that there are no governmental subsidies involved, and thus growing betel vines costs an owner's continuous investment of money/capital (see Plate 6.1). Besides, the employers have to hire wage workers to take care of it, for it is a labour-intensive job. The major part of the work concerning growing betel vines consists in the following procedures: transplanting, weeding, fertilising, applying the insecticide, removing the over-ripe or rotten leaves, hand picking, and sorting and arranging betel pepper leaves. Given that all these tasks have to be done manually,



Plate 6.1 A woman working with the betel vines

there are always vacancies for the workers.

The semi-open black tents function as a green house, for both the growth speed and quality of betel vines are entirely dependent on the control over the volume of sunshine. In summer, the leaves grow faster and yield more than in winter, and thus the summer price of leaves is lower than the winter one. Hence, the workload for summer workers is heavier than winter ones for the sake of making a profit. Correlatively, the fluctuation of market prices directly affects the workload in hand picking leaves, for it solely relies on the proportion between the market price and daily wages. Compared to the wages for sorting leaves on a piece-rate basis, wages for hand picking betel vines are relatively constant, and the average daily wage is 1,000 NT dollars. Given the sensitivity to the market price, an employer has to make the workers hand pick more leaves for the sake of securing profit and capital.

In Taromak, there are two houses which have invested in betel vines, but only one of them made a profit after a three-year period of investment. Interestingly, the owner Malaling, who is in her fifties, attributed the reason why she and her house members succeeded in growing betel vines to the fact that 'members of my house run business less in a Taromakian way than a Taiwanese one'. That is, with respect to farming cash crops, they use the methods that their Taiwanese trading partners instructed them in so that their wealth could accumulate. Unlike other villagers, Malaling's parents did not ever grow lemongrass in the late 1960s, for 'only people of Taromak grew it', implicitly excluding her and members of her house from the category of co-villagers in regard to cash cropping. Instead, her father grew orchids and made a fortune by trading them to Taiwanese merchants. Malaling's mother is an elder sister of the current headman of Taromak, and her father is Japanese, born in Taromak, and has now become a citizen of Taiwan. Before the Japanese colonisation, girls of the noble houses were supposed to marry their equals, whether it be men from other noble houses in Taromak or the like in other Rukai villages. The marital alliance as such would keep the nobles from socially 'going downwards' (*davace ta'eta'e*). The Japanese, as the then power-holders, were regarded as people of high rank so that an alliance with them was socially acceptable, though it rarely took place.

Proud of the success of her house in growing different kinds of cash crop, the owner moreover attributed it to her house members being well-educated and 'clever, cunning or skilful' (*malrik'ilri*) in learning how to grow crops and conduct commercial exchange. For the Rukai, being well-educated indicates the better economic conditions of a house, and school education in turn makes one broaden one's mind or vision. An educated person is thought to consider or tackle daily

affairs, business, or communal affairs by deploying ways out of the reach of poorly-educated residents. Besides, the quality of being 'cunning and skilful' has equal weight with the importance of education, or education is even thought to reinforce the quality of being skilful and cunning.

In October 2004 I joined Malaling's work with betel vines for four days. None of her workers were present in the fields when we arrived. She did not show any particular emotion regarding their tardiness by saying, 'We arrived earlier than the usual work time'. After donning her working gloves, she took out one iron nail-shaped blade and sharpened it over a knife, and then attached it to the right-hand thumb with narrow brown tapes. This 'iron nail blade' is designed for hand picking leaves. The proper way to use it is that with the blade under the stalk of leaves targeted, the worker just gently pushed upwards to get the leaves off. 'You have to maintain this position while hand picking. It is easier to remove the leaves and will not dull the blade. In so doing, the workers won't spend too much time on re-sharpening the blades, and thus they can hand pick more leaves', she explained.

She showed me how to select the proper leaves to pick, and I followed her in order to figure out the process. Within two seconds, my eyes had to discriminate the degree of maturity of leaves, select one which was neither too green nor too old, hand pick it while immediately turning to the back of the leaf to check whether or not there was any trace of insect eggs, following which I was either to put it into a basket or to throw it onto the ground. Immediately after these tasks, I needed to take off the old leaves, leaving only one green healthy leaf on each betel vine as 'a mother leaf' to sprout more leaves. All these procedures should be done within a couple of seconds, otherwise the workers would fail to reach the daily workload in proportion to the wage. In addition, the design of the tool for work and the hand posture participate in the act of increasing production as well.

Malaling's brother arrived at the tent later, and he just came to check the waterproof canvas on the ground and ensure the stability of the frames and nets of each row of betel vines. I was amazed at her work pace, but she replied that she had slowed down. If she did too much, as she remarked, the wage workers would have less to do. Over the hand picking, she suddenly came to the reason why she was here:

I don't have to work here today, but my body is used to work. No job to do is boredom. If I stay at home, it is just a waste of time. If I work, at least I can make jobs get done one day earlier. Thus, one day's wage is saved.



In her view, the employer's feeling about time spent in the house is stamped with the imprint of the waste of time, or precisely, labour time. Strikingly, in an employer's statement that failing to work for one day is thought of as the loss of a daily wage, one day's time takes on 'thing-ness' in the sense that it is concretised in the calculability of a wage. Accordingly, not doing work (for pay), implicitly referring to doing domestic work, paradoxically, takes on the meaning of idling or the loss of a daily wage, or, taken one step further, failing in the provision of the product of work for domestic consumption, insofar as money obtained from work is seen as critical to domestic reproduction, as mentioned in Chapter 4. In this regard, it is fair to say that both labour time and a person's work assume the form of a commodity.

Interestingly, in this case an employer attributed her performance of work to 'being used to' (*twa lra'onga*) it. To conduct work is not only for the sake of subsistence but also integral to dispositions. This harks back to my observation of the roselle workers who also referred to their being accustomed to work. In the light of their statements, being accustomed to work can be interpreted as their long-standing daily habit of doing garden work (or wage labour) to the extent that work is engrained into their bodily dispositions.

Let me return to the betel vine work. Two female workers, Kaliwa and Silone, both of whom are in their late thirties, arrived after a short while and then started to hand pick leaves. Meanwhile, Malaling went to buy some bottles of canned coffee and alcohol as the gift of *acebe* for the workers. After having a cup of alcohol mixed with coffee, the workers were full of smiles. Silone said to Malaling, 'How did you know that I need to be refreshed?' Being asked to have some, I told them that I was unable to drink alcohol. I then wondered how one could work after alcohol. However, I was struck by the fact that they worked at as constant a pace as when they had just started, whereas they looked less nervous than at the time they arrived. Indeed their laughter and jokes reverberated around this semi-closed black tent.

Facing each other along a row of betel vines, the wage workers cooperated to hand pick leaves. They told me that it was easier for them to chat over work, which made the hand picking less dull. Pleased that the boss would bring them alcohol and coffee to cheer them up, Kaliwa said that it was 'so that I would feel like working more for the boss'. After a short time, I found that their baskets were almost half filled, and that some of the leaves inside were apparently over-ripe. I gently asked them whether the size of the leaves in their baskets was the proper one for sale. Silone replied that they had to hand pick one hundred kilograms in a day, and also that those in basket looked fine to them. Checking the leaves left on the ground, I found that many fewer were thrown away than Malaling had left previously. In other

words, the workers kept more leaves that seemed to be unsuitable for the market for the purpose of reaching the daily workload. I later asked Malaling how she could tell the weight of leaves collected up to the demanded workload, for no scale was around, and she replied that her eyes could do this job because of experience. It seems that a person's continuous exposure to the performance of a similar task will transform a technical task into one's bodily disposition.

Having two workers in the garden, Malaling insisted on working along with them because 'Workers would not work that hard while I am not around. They would loaf around. I am here to keep an eye on them, and ensure that they work hard enough'. Her response highlights the necessity of an employer's control over the workers on the shop floor since the total produce is thought of as proportional to daily wages, which correlates with her profit. That is, this employer believes that her presence in the workplace, taken in the sense of practising surveillance, amounts to securing the surplus value. While the workers were hand picking, Malaling took a broom to collect waste leaves into a big refuse sack, and they were taken as fertiliser for the gardens beside her tent.

After work, I followed Malaling to her father's house and found her sister-in-law Baivale, who is her late thirties, was sorting the leaves collected the previous day with another worker. Baivale had two little boys to care for, which prevented her from working in the betel vine fields as Malaling did. Even though a wage worker was hired to sort and arrange betel pepper leaves, Baivale came to work along with the worker just because, as she said, 'Staying at home is a waste of time. Joining the job of sorting leaves means that I can save one day's wage for a worker'. Once again, the view of doing domestic work at home as idling finds its appearance in the member of an employer's house. This reminds us not only that they identify one day's time with an imagined daily wage noted in Chapter 5, but also that the performance of housework is often taken to be insignificant indicated in Chapter 3. More strikingly, Rukai view of time spent at home being waste of time attests to E. P. Thompson's thesis of time being money in the capitalist society.

Furthermore, an employer's sensitivity to the workload of every worker is related to another dimension of growing betel vines: capital. In addition to land, planting betel vines costs a great amount of money from the start: the establishment and the maintenance of the tents, the frames and nets of each row for the growth of betel vines, fertilisers and insecticide, waterproof canvas covering the roots of the vines in order to make the fertiliser function better. All of these require the continuous investment of money. Given the pressure of capital investment, the manoeuvres in both offering the gift and physical surveillance do have the effect of

extracting surplus value in a dual process. The gift simultaneously transfigures and disguises the intention of the act of extraction, and on the other hand, the surveillance exerts a coercive force to ensure the accomplishment of extraction. Indeed, the continuous investment of capital is then construed to create social differentiation amongst residents, to which I shall return.

## Relations of Production as Social Distinction

In Taromak, either success in cash-cropping or the possession of a skill in making money into capital is considered a mark of distinction amongst villagers. In contrast to the aforementioned successful case is that of Tina Bolanga, whose betel vine fields were unable to yield as many leaves as Malaling's due to the fact that she was unable to invest enough money for the maintenance of the tents. The typhoons in 2003 damaged her tents seriously, and the ragged tents subsequently failed to control the growth and the quality of betel pepper. This in turn diminished the yield in terms of marketability, and further reduced her income remarkably. She was stuck into a vicious cycle of money shortage. As time passed, she cared less and less for her fields due to this haunting financial burden. As Malaling's husband commented, to grow cash crops like betel vines was costly, and 'Nowadays only the haves are able to afford it. For the have-nots, they do contract farming such as growing rice or doing the odd jobs'. Put another way, cash-cropping is considered to be a practice indicative of one's economic performance of being part of 'the haves' in Taromak.

Intriguingly, people labelled as the 'have-nots' such as wage workers, contract farmers and the like, seemed to be inclined to show their acceptance of their current jobs on condition that no better jobs were available to them. 'Only the pitiable and poor (*kolro*) need to make money [by doing wage labour and the like]', said Tama Licevale, 'I could do anything to make money: farmer, vendor or building worker'. His words reminded me of Tegetege, who told me that his limited education only allowed him to do various kinds of labour for subsistence. It seemed to me that they accepted the current condition of their lives as it is. One question comes to my mind: do Rukai workers possess any means to improve or even change the seemingly unchangeable social conditions of which they are part?

For example, Fatilome, who was in his late forties, once spoke of his incapacity in earning wages so that his parents and he put their hope in his child. 'My parents named my boy as *taok'ei* (this name has been used for generations in Taromak). We hope that he will become a boss and make money'. As stated in Chapter 2, a name



bearer is thought of as sharing a similar biography of preceding namesakes, and this is just such a case. If one was given a proper personal name, giving an additional nickname could attach to the name bearer additional dimensions of a wished-for destiny or hoped-for social position without contradicting or annulling the biography of the personal name.

In other words, in the light of the cultural logic of naming practices, socially deprived Rukai workers could create or be imbued with new personal qualities or skills to cope with the condition of their existence, though such a practice unavoidably registers the illusion in terms of its practical effects. Nevertheless, life in the reality sometimes runs against their wishful thinking. Interestingly, few Rukai people would underestimate or call off the magic of naming practices, even though it fails in some cases.

Let me return to the making of social classes in terms of relations of production. The emphatic distinction between employers and employees also demonstrates that the wedge amongst Rukai people seems to be exacerbated by their profound involvement in the capitalistic economy. However, such a distinction is not merely unilaterally caused by the fact that the ubiquity of money plays as a catalyst in reforming social relations in the idiom of the commodity as Marx (1976[1867]) points out. Rather, I concur with the view exemplified by both Pierre Bourdieu (1990) and Sherry Ortner (2006) with respect to the making of socio-economic class, which call attention to the fact that class in effect take shape in both objective/material and subjective/symbolic senses. Whereas the former refers to economic conditions or means of production, the latter touches upon 'representation of the privileges and limits of those positions, the *habitus* of both external practices and internal senses of boundaries and/or possibilities' (Ortner 2006: 78). Thus I would suggest that the exploration of class-making in the Rukai context entails the examination of the following questions. In what cultural idioms is an employer portrayed? How is the relation between an employer and an employee conceived? Finally, what sort of social implications does the configuration of relations of production take on in a local context?

Let me begin with how the role of an employer is constructed in Taromak. The vernacular term for an employer, *taok'ei*, is a loanword from Taiwanese dialect, and it literally refers to the head of a family. Generally speaking, in the context of Han-Chinese people, *taok'ei* has multiple meanings: the landowners or rich who employ workers to farm the land; the boss; a leader in a folk religious organisation; and an analogy to the head of the body when a family is imagined as a person. Aside from these meanings, an employer is thought to look after employees (Shieh 2003:



84-85, 279-80). For the Rukai, an employer or boss, sharing a resemblance with its Han-Chinese counterpart, is thought of to be a person who pays a wage on time, who offers the gift of *acebe* (foodstuffs and other sorts of items) to demonstrate generosity and transform implicit coercion to extract labour from the workers as mentioned in Chapter 5, and who is a person of power in terms of wealth or capital and thereby is endowed with the duty of care towards the workers. In this regard, an employer is imagined in both kinship and 'capitalist' terms in the Rukai context yet much of their imagination of the role of an employer is bound up with kinship morality.

In this chapter, we see that both an employer and an employee recognise their relation as it is. Despite the fact that an employer's provision of the gift of *acebe* is redolent of the morality of kinship, both parties acquiesce that it is an essential practice indispensable to facilitate exploitation. Thus, neither party ever invokes any moral code of kinship to demand the other to fulfil other social obligations such as bringing more drinks or holding a home feast to treat the workers, as the roselle owner did at the end of work for his workers broadcasting roselle seeds. What is more, an employer's investment of capital and accumulation of wealth is apparently in defiance of kinship mutuality and help insofar as money is thought of as the embodiment of movement between houses of kin as seen in Chapter 4.

Viewed from this perspective, work involving betel vines and the making of relations of production are governed more by pure economic interest than by kinship morality, albeit its actualisation remains dependant upon the kind of practice implicative of kinship. However, the social distinction between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' does not completely override kinship relations and morality. For instance, the funeral of Malaling's mother in the winter of 2004 took place with the help and assistance of kin and deprived villagers. Of course the members of the bereaved house provided foodstuffs during the vigil, a practice of mutuality. Despite the emergence of social 'classes' based on both capital and relations of production, loss of life is an occasion in need of the company of kin, for employers too.

### **Time for Money, Time for Kin**

With the separation of 'pure' economic practices from kinship morality in time-rated tasks, it seems that the monetary sense of time in Taromak does exert its influence upon transforming people's time consciousness into a unified notion of time as E. P. Thompson (1993[1967]) argues. But his seminal thesis obviously

neglects to pay attention to the exploration of the relation between a worker's domestic life in relation to work life. Thus I concur with Whipp's (1987) criticisms of both Thompson's overemphasis on the employer's control and the linear progression from task-oriented time to labour time, rather than looking at the (possible) intersection between domestic time and labour time. Whipp's point is the case in my observation of the roselle workers, whereas Thompson's thesis is perfectly applicable to the case of betel vine workers. Why does this discrepancy in relation to the sense of time take place?

Further, I suggest that Thompson fails to tell us whether or not the achievement of the conformity of labour time and family/domestic time is bound up with the fact that both workers and employers share a similar cultural assumption of notions of time and work, whereby the time discipline from the workplace alongside the moral preaching of Protestant ethics enables the (re-)shaping of people's apprehension of time in the everyday. I suggest that at issue in the exploration of the intersection of different notions of time on the part of the workers is whether or not an alternative notion of time is brought forth or evoked with regard to work amongst the workers.

A case in point is that the villagers have conflicting views of the nature of obligatory collective labour, *agolri* (see Plate 6.2). When Rukai people were recruited to perform the *agolri* for communal events such as the millet harvest rite, the view that time is a wage was often put forward and it was even construed as the only source to sustain members of their houses. In fact, the practice of *agolri* dates back to colonisation. Under Japanese rule, the aim of implementing *agolri* labour was to recruit Rukai people as *corvée* for the purpose of public constructions, mainly building roads and irrigation canals for rice (SART 1926). Interestingly enough, the Rukai in the post-colonial era even adopted this form of collective labour to gather villagers to work for the annual millet harvest rite (*kalra lisiya*). In July 1998, for instance, I came across the occurrence that residents who did not intend to participate in the *agolri* were required to prepare 500 NT dollars (about 8 pounds sterling), half of an assumed daily wage, as a substitute for their labour. The head of the group in which these people were would ride a motorbike to their houses to collect money and kept a record of the house numbers in a notebook.<sup>3</sup> The money collected was then used to buy snacks, betel nuts, soft drinks, and alcohol for group members doing the *agolri*. At that time, many Rukai people asserted to me that all adult villagers should conduct the practice of *agolri* as an obligation, while money

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<sup>3</sup> In the organising of the *agolri*, all the houses in the village are divided into several groups according to physical proximity, and each group is responsible for the pavilion that they will share during the harvest rite to enjoy themselves, chat and rest in the shade.



Plate 6.2 Men carrying out *agolri* activity

was then introduced to exempt people from compulsory labour for the village. This implies that money is taken to be an equivalent to the practice of *agolri*, and therefore acts out the duty in relation to membership of a community.

From 2000 onwards, however, less and less of this substitute in cash could be collected due to the fact that some people did not feel obliged to do the *agolri*. On the other hand, an increasing number of people, men in particular, made an appeal to the village head that they were entitled to wage payments based on their time invested in the *agolri*, which usually took several days to finish. One reason for making such an appeal was partly because all the residents knew that the then village head and the staff members of the village office would apply for the subsidies for the preparation and performance of the millet harvest rite from the local government. The *agolri* workers thus came to claim that part of the subsidies should cover wages for their labour. Some villagers also consented to the wage payment as much for rewarding the workers as for positively affecting their inclination to perform compulsory labour.

Years later, in March 2005, at a preparatory meeting for the performance of the harvest rite, similar issues regarding payments to the *agolri* workers were again put forward. Tama Habalei, who is in his late fifties, proposed that all the *agolri* workers should be paid with daily wages because some of them often asked for leave of absence. By contrast, Banwkonga, who is in his early forties and who objected to the payments for the practice of *agolri*, first expressed his empathetic understanding of the condition of their lives. Then he resolutely promised that the *agolri* workers would be offered lunch boxes, drinks, and betel nuts during the course of doing the *agolri*. He further turned to advocate the nobleness of both the *agolri* practice and workers by highlighting that they 'make a remarkable contribution to the village. We hope that every house would sacrifice one day or two to accomplish the *agolri*. Don't see this as a chance to earn wages'. On hearing this, most workers were silent with sullen faces. Walking with me when the meeting was over, Tama Habalei reiterated that his proposal was out of consideration for his and other workers' houses. 'I am not asking for huge fortunes', he sighed on the dimly-lit street, 'I simply ask for wages to feed the members of my house'.

This issue continued to ferment after the meeting. A couple of days later, the leader of a faction opposed to Banwkonga addressed another gathering to say that the practice of *agolri* was of colonial origin rather than an indigenous practice of work, and thus all the *agolri* workers were entitled to be paid as if they worked in a factory. In order to make the workers feel like participating in the *agolri* activity, as he emphasised, making payments to the workers was absolutely reasonable.



Conversely, Banwkonga and his fellow members insisted that the practice of *agolri* was grounded on the spirit of the help amongst kin so that it was different from work in a factory.

In this light, how the time spent on the *agolri* is construed—as time for wage labour or as time for kin—in effect relies on how a work practice is conceived of, as an equivalent to wage labour or as help. Initially a colonial practice to recruit *corvée*, the practice of *agolri* was considered by many Rukai elders as mandatory labour and they took it for granted that no wage should be its equivalent. This is the case for the post-colonial era, and it became a practice redolent of help amongst kin for the village's sake, an imaginary house at large. Behind the veil of kinship morality, therefore, the practice of compulsory collective labour *agolri* is viewed or transfigured as the realisation of mutuality amongst kin. At another level, paradoxically, it comes to take on the meaning of work without pay, as a counterpart of wage labour.

On the other hand, in contemporary situations, the Rukai also deploy the device of substitution of money for compulsory labour. It is argued that the device of collecting money as a substitute for labour is conducive to the equation of the obligation of work with a wage, and even money is considered to affect people's attitude towards joining the *agolri*. The equal share of the *agolri* work amongst houses in the village gradually dissolves into people's withdrawal from it as well as the isomorphism of wages, the product of work, and sources viable for domestic reproduction.

However, the monetary image of time does not predominate in the entirety of social life. Conversely, some Rukai people articulated that time for the wedding and mortuary practices of kin could not and should not be identified with a daily wage. In June 2004, Tina Awbene, who is in her fifties, was invited to give a short talk at an engagement feast. Aside from preaching the significance of the marital union in terms of Christian doctrine, she raised her voice to accentuate the import of attending similar social occasions in terms of companionship:

Someone told me the other day that she hesitated to attend today's feast because she still has work to do. If she comes, she will lose her 1,000 NT dollars [a common expression of an assumed daily wage]. My kinspersons and fellow villagers, do not think that you will lose your 1,000 or 500 dollars! Just think that you are here to do kin things! We just come here to keep our kin company, and also make the occasion as enjoyable as possible. Our relatives need our company as much as we need theirs...Just keep in mind that we are doing it for the sake of our kin.

On different occasions, such dilemmas were not uncommon. Similar to the *agolri*, attendance at weddings is nearly always identified with the loss of a daily wage. I was often struck by the spontaneous expression of one day's time as a daily wage, even on such social occasions—except for the mortuary practices as noted in Chapter 2. But it soon becomes clear that the identification of time with money always meets confrontation from counter-thought characterised by a variety of moral codes: mutuality, help, and company. In this case, mutuality and company share little or even no common ground with money; this is slightly different from the practice of *agolri*, which is more about concrete labour and subsistence.

I am not implying that time for *agolri* is more prone to monetisation than time for attending weddings or engagements. Indeed time for *agolri* is construed as time for kin with respect to the morality of help, and as time for money when being analogous to work in a factory. On occasions regarding marriage, the presence of a person is not merely about kinship obligation. Time for kin in this case refers to mutuality, company, and implicitly, remembrance in the mortuary practices, and all of these are often tied to each other. When one recalls what kin have done for his/her house on similar occasions in the past, as the Rukai stressed, it is unthinkable not to be present, or to do what kin should do at that time. In the meantime, time for kin connotes company, and then enacts conviviality as well as domestic sociality as noted in the previous chapter. As a consequence, to convert one day's time into a daily wage in this case implies a person's neglect or obliviousness of the past practices of kin, that is, of making relatedness. Admittedly, the expression of regarding time in the idiom of money/a wage is germinative in a way, but what preoccupies their minds is concern for domestic life rather than for the accumulation of wealth.

Let me reiterate the questions raised at the start of this section. Why do contrasting views towards time and work occur amongst the Rukai? Is an alternative notion of time brought forth in the everyday? My exploration shows that people's spontaneous identification of one day's time with money reveals a long-standing engagement in the capitalist economy, and this seems to validate E. P. Thompson's thesis to some extent. However, it cannot be taken at face value. Indeed I would argue that the notion of time for making money is often entangled with that of time for keeping kin company on social occasions. In the everyday, similarly, the significance of work for pay cannot make sense without attention to what work for kin implies.

## Conclusion

In contrast to my observation of people's experience of piece work in the last chapter, work and wage payments on a time-rate basis are interpreted as filled with toil and bitterness. I have argued that subjective experience in relation to time-rated tasks is connected to previous work as child labour in a factory. Significantly, the undertaking of wage or child labour resulted from the working of intimacy in a variety of manners and contexts, in addition to financial hardship and poor education. Despite the fact that some children opted for manual labour in the hope of continuing their friendship with their peers, parental authority worked as the mild coercion of domestic intimacy to draw under age children into the labour market. In the workplace, the metaphorical association between a factory and family was deployed to force young workers to work long hours. It is fair to say that the views of both capitalist work as toil and a wage as 'bitter money' are redolent of experiences of unreasonable labour time and the coercive aspect of parental authority.

In contemporary situations, work with betel vines demonstrates that labour time is critical to an employer's measure of extracting more produce from a worker due to the investment of capital as well as the payment of a daily wage. Interestingly, both an employer and a worker recognise the effectiveness of gifts to extract more produce. In addition, the distinction of the 'haves' from 'have-nots' founded on both capital and relations of production is made apparent. This is not only the inevitable consequence of Rukai people's engagement in wage labour, but also the intersection with how class positionalities are manufactured in cultural and symbolic terms. In this regard, it gives rise to the separation between kinship morality and pure economic interest.

However, the monetary image of time is not always a mastery of the notion of time. More often, the import of time for making money is driven by the concern for domestic reproduction. In some cases, time for kin gains the upper hand on the occasions of weddings and mourning when it comes to the salience of company and remembrance regarding the making of relatedness. In other words, different notions of time embedded in practices and activities intersect with, and even becomes identical with, each other in some cases, whilst they conversely turn out to be antithetical to each other in other circumstances.

I have explored Rukai people's engagement in the capitalist economy with regard to the apprehension of labour time, the performance of time-rated and

piece-rated work, the perception of wage payments and the making of employer-employee relations, and indicated how their constructs of these activities and notions peculiar to capitalism entangle with kinship morality and mutuality. However, what is the story of the other side of their experience of capitalism, to wit, unemployment or disengagement from capitalism? This comes under scrutiny in the following chapter.



## Chapter 7

### **Kin Mutuality and a Moral Wage**

In this chapter, I focus on Rukai people's disengagement from wage labour to examine in what manner wage labour is associated with, or could be dissociated from, domesticity. In particular, I explore how they cope with unemployment, which is synonymous with the discontinuation of domestic reproduction in Taronak. One quotidian way is through the provision of food from kin. Another is related to the anticipation of the government to provide employment opportunities so as to see them through. Perceiving the government as a caretaker figure, the Rukai take for granted that government officials as power-holders should conduct the duty of care with regard to employment.

Fundamental to mutuality, siblingship implies a set of relations implicative of inseparability and permanence. By inseparability I refer to the shared view that every child is thought to elicit the conception of another sibling as its companion. Based on this, siblings are those to whom a person in difficulties will first turn for help. By permanence I mean that siblingship outlives human mortality, and that it is non-substitutive and unbreakable, unlike the relative vulnerability to change of the conjugal relationship. This reminds us that the theme of the permanence of siblingship in contrast to the unstable conjugal relationship in other Austronesian cases, such as the Luwu of Indonesia (Errington 1987; 1990), the Malays (Carsten 1997) and the Bicolanos in the Philippines (Cannell 1999). Thus help is self-evident amongst siblings, for one can hardly refuse to give aid to siblings. Dependence upon kin for food or comfort is indeed one way to cope with the material and emotional disturbances caused by unemployment.

As noted in Chapter 2, moreover, work is the foremost duty of a married couple, and unemployment inevitably has a stronger impact upon them than on their aged parents. Nothing is more natural for Rukai elders than to confer a married couple—a man in particular—with the responsibility of making money for the sake of his dependants. By contrast, women are not blamed for their reliance on kin mutuality and nor are elders. As a result, the maleness of a man as the head of a house is connected with wage labour. I further suggest that a married couple's ungendered, joint labour to feed their house accordingly takes on gendered forms. In the wake of

unemployment, the prevalence of heavy drinking amongst men is criticised as a lack of concern for the members of their houses, but can be also taken to express the emotional disturbance of a jobless man.

In the face of increasing unemployment, the government's 'welfare-to-work' policy intends to bring it down, but in practice this policy paradoxically recruits more elderly workers than middle-aged couples. Seeing the benefits of the policy in terms of having money in their hands, elders occupy the position of feeding the members of their houses, and thereby make their unemployed married children dependent on them.

To begin with, I will describe a vignette of a lone unemployed Rukai mother to illustrate how siblingship is evoked to underpin kinship morality to cope with unemployment.

### **Invaluable Siblings, Permanent Help**

In July 1996, I first made acquaintance with Lumiya as she returned to her mother's house with her then seven-month baby boy. She and her partner, who is also Taromak-based, were co-workers on a building site in Taipei, and they had seen each other for a couple of months before deciding to stay in the same flat to save money for their future. At first, she assumed that her mother would give permission for their marriage for the baby's sake, but her mother rejected her proposition without a second thought. Lumiya's mother insisted that the kin of her partner's house would develop emotional disorders (e.g., brain damage due to heavy drinking) as they age, even though the kin of her partner were welcoming her to be their in-law. As shown in Chapter 2, the personal qualities of grandparents or kin are thought to be transmitted through the sharing of relatedness with both maternal and paternal sides, and accordingly the conduct of affines-to-be very often plays a critical role in the arrangement of a proposed marital union on the part of parents and grandparents. In some cases, if the couple-to-be insists and takes a firm position, their parents sometimes yield to their children, but this was not the case for Lumiya. Besides, her mother insisted that Lumiya's baby boy is of their house and decided to give him a personal name from her mother's side. Intriguingly, her mother sometimes spontaneously mentioned that some habits or dispositions of her grandson indeed connect with the kin of his father's side.

Lumiya was not the only unmarried or single mother in Taromak, though others might have different reasons, such as coming to know of their partners' affairs, or

leaving a 'good for nothing' partner or husband. Many have their aged parents to care for the children so that they can work for pay to provide for both their elders and children. For example, Lumiya came back to help with the new restaurant run by her mother and kin, but her mother tried to separate her from her partner in the hope of making her marry someone else. During her stay at home, Lumiya's partner remitted money to her bank account, and once in while took them to a nice restaurant in town as part of their family life.

The business of her restaurant followed the ebb and flow of wider economic conditions. When most of the villagers were employed, many would bring friends from other cities to enjoy 'Rukai cuisine' and have fun singing Karaoke. They did make some money in the first three years, and the money was in turn put into renovating and decorating the interior of the restaurant in order to attract more visitors and villagers. However, in the wake of the overall economic recession in Taiwan from the end of the twentieth century, the business continued to decline, and from time to time, the cash income could not even cover the monthly electricity and water bills. Distressed by the shortage of money for her child's education, Lumiya started to look for waged work to support her child and her parents. During the weekends, she was also in charge of the restaurant because she was a licensed chef and really talented in cookery. After several jobs, Lumiya left her last position partly because she could not stand the over-demanding restrictions over labour time set by her Taiwanese employers. Another reason is that she suffered from both emotional (bi-polar) depression and high blood pressure, and then she suddenly realised that she was overburdened with the pressure of making money.

Lumiya's mother and brothers held the view that her depression would be cured by familial intimacy, especially the help and comfort from siblings. After Lumiya was informed that she had bi-polar condition, her mother did not press her to make a decision about finding a job or helping with the restaurant, but she still objected to Lumiya's partner marrying her. Lumiya's mother asked one of her sons to help with his sister because 'only siblings are reliable at this time'. With her mother's consent, Lumiya's brother helped her partner to get a job with better pay, though she never agreed to their marriage. Lumiya's other brother, who lived in another town, often made phone calls to find out how she was doing. Whenever he came back to Taromak he took her son to McDonald's in the town to treat him, or would arrange a trip to neighbouring scenic spots such as a hot spring resort.

Siblingship is much valued in Taromak because it speaks of central values in relation to morality: co-operation/collaboration, mutuality, help, and harmonious relationships. An incident that I encountered will illuminate how much harmony



amongst siblings is valued. One day in 2005, some middle-aged people came across some local news in which one younger brother was killed by his elder brother in Likabon, a village next to Taromak, and they commented that it is hard to imagine murder among siblings, whatever the cause. 'It could not be the case for the Rukai', one of them remarked, 'Siblings should help each other and are always on good terms. They never fail to give a helping hand'.

As Rukai elders put it, 'Siblings are priceless' (*Makucingale lamataka*, *makucingale* also has the meaning [of something] being very expensive). The centrality of siblingship in a person's life lies in that they are both unique/non-substitutable and permanent. They are those to whom other siblings in need will turn first. Siblings are non-substitutable not only because the birth of a baby will elicit the coming of another sibling as described in Chapter 2, but also because in day-to-day situations the practice of mutual assistance amongst siblings is 'at once to a sibling and yourself [the help giver]', rather than to individuals other than the helper. It seems that a set of siblings comes to constitute as an entity rather than being a gathering of individual persons. In this regard, siblings are far from being 'others' and are an integral part of the constitution of a person. Differently stated, for a person to conduct a practice of mutual aid is tantamount to manifesting the encompassment of siblingship, which bears a resemblance with the symbolic connotation of siblingship in the construct of personhood amongst the Malays and others in the Austronesian world (Carsten 1997; Errington 1987).

Moreover, a metaphor often deployed by Rukai elders is the image of intestines; the Rukai learn the names of these body parts from their experience of killing pigs on the occasion of a wedding or from dividing up game. All siblings are connected with each other as if they formed a line of intestines, and consequently are taken to be both undividable and unbreakable. This indeed stands in sharp contrast to the view that the conjugal union is subject to change. Seen from this perspective, the metaphor of intestines indeed naturalises and makes siblingship appear to be unitary since there is no clearly discernible point to tell one from the other in the image of intestines. Hence siblingship constitutes sameness and oneness.

More strikingly, siblingship is permanent and even outlives human mortality. When passing by the cemetery, for example, Rukai elders often identified a tomb as a place where so-and-so's sibling was buried rather than with reference to parent-child relationships. If we juxtapose this with the practice of establishing coupled graves for deceased couples noted in Chapter 2, then it is clear that siblingship and conjugal relations are sets of relatedness thought to defy mortality in different ways. Whereas conjugal relations are made into the thing-form of graves, siblingship is identified



through remembrance. As mentioned in Chapter 4, remembrance is pivotal to the making of ancestry on the part of Rukai elders, and here I would add that remembrance partakes of why siblingship is beyond the ephemerality of beings in Taromak. Embodying unity, undivability, sameness and oneness, siblingship stands, from the Rukai point of view, as an exemplar kind of mutuality; more precisely, the integrality of siblingship ensues from, and is simultaneously reproduced by, the practices of mutual help. To help and care for jobless siblings indeed attests to the morality of economic practices in the Rukai context.

However, unemployment seems to have a greater impact upon a man than a woman in that a man is thought to provide the product of his labour as the duty of the head of a house, synonymous with the maleness of a married man. I examine below how the making of maleness is disrupted by unemployment.

### **Unemployment: Unmaking the Image of a Man of Power**

In Taromak, most of the unemployed people were laid off partly owing to the economic recession both in the Taiwanese and the global context since the end of the last century. This has been exacerbated by the policy of employing international migrant workers from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand ever since the late 1990s. The lower wages paid to international migrant workers, at least in the eyes of the Rukai, was taken to be responsible for edging local labourers out of the domestic labour market. Another reason for unemployment amongst the men is that the content of manual jobs on a construction site or factory assembly line is associated with potential calamity.

During the daytime on weekdays in Taromak, once in a while some middle-aged men just sat around a small table to share beer and betel nuts in front of a house. From time to time I would come across one middle-aged man staggering in the street and smelling of alcohol. Unemployed men were not socially visible to others unless they needed more alcohol from the grocery stores. Some grocery owners would put up a board with 'No buying on credit', yet others still tolerated such purchases for the sake of their relatedness with the unemployed. More often than not, the unemployed were present on occasions where alcohol was provided, such as weddings and vigil keeping. During the period of keeping vigil for late Tama Ti'angesw in October 1999, for instance, one drunken man tried to start joking frivolously with me, but was soon held back by several elderly attendants around. The attendants remarked in a sympathetic tone how promising this drunken man was

before he was sacked, as well as how good-looking and nice he used to be. 'Everything changed after he had no job. His boss hired "foreign workers" instead. He [the employer] simply wanted to make money', commented Gilagilao, who is in his late thirties. In spite of their sympathy, the attendants also grumbled that this unemployed man drank too much to get a decent job. Tama Molege blamed unemployed men for their obsession (*mwa va'elre*) with alcohol getting them into a permanent predicament:

...It is so easy to have alcohol now. In the past only the elders could have millet beer for themselves or guests. At present we just walk into a grocery to get it. Alcohol could not find anyone jobs. Having a lot of alcohol all day long would damage houses.

Tina Salinga also mentioned that the obsession with one specific thing would drive a person's attention and concern away from the members of his/her house and kin. 'Members of a house and kin are our concern', she said, 'Excessive devotion to one single thing without them in mind would drive them away'. Put differently, a drinking problem, an expression of obsession, amounts to having little concern for both the members of a house and their livelihoods. Moreover, easy access to alcohol, a consequence of the ubiquity of commodities, also comes into play with regard to the expression of a person's obsession. Indeed, the excessive devotion to, or obsession with, any single practice without attention to kin illuminates a heavy drinker's individuality independent of relatedness. It is fair to say that the making of maleness is manifested in the concern for kin in terms of working to sustain them.

On the part of the jobless, on the other hand, having alcohol is a means of expressing the depression and bitterness caused by unemployment. Natege, who is in his late thirties, turned to alcohol after he was injured from his last job as a building worker. In 2003, he fell to the ground from the scaffolding and injured his left leg. As a contracted-out worker, he failed to receive any redundancy pay, let alone anything for medication. With poor medical care, he could walk as usual but was unable to stand or kneel down for a long while. This physical disability, though unobservable to the eye, has closed the door to his doing manual jobs ever since. More devastating was that his wife divorced him at nearly the same time. Given no alternative, he returned to Taromak to work in his father and brother's restaurant.

Alcohol, as I was told, had been his daily meal ever since. But he showed a grievance towards kin who blamed him for his heavy drinking, which was close to alcoholism. 'They never knew how bitter it is in my heart', said he with a poignant sense of disaffection. It seems that heavy drinking becomes the expression of his

distress about unemployment. In spite of working for his kin, he simply identified that as offering help (*waska'ele*) instead of doing work (*twa lavai*). In this sense, he was unable to bring up his several children alone as the proper head of a house, whose duty is to provide the fruit of labour to feed the members of his house. By implication, the emotional disturbances from unemployment are further associated with the centrality of a decent job, or precisely wage labour, in the making of maleness in contemporary Taromak.

Similar to the Greek case, alcohol is associated with male companionship amongst the Rukai. For instance, Papataxiarchis (1991) notes how Greek men use the sharing of alcohol in the coffee shop to create and perpetuate male friendship, or precisely, masculinity. Given that Greek women dominate families, men turn to the coffee shops to make friends in order to manifest their masculine identities. By contrast, Rukai men share alcohol after work almost daily, either in the village or elsewhere. Drinking with male friends, as noted in Chapter 5, is taken to allow them to regain energy after hard labour, and meanwhile it is associated with their mutual understanding of each other's feelings.

Given that wages embody a man's labour as noted in Chapters 2 and 3, unemployment announces that men are deprived of access to the obligation of the head of the house. When a jobless man turns to alcohol it is not only because he loses the capacity of looking after others, as he is rebuked by the elders, but also because he finds no alternative other than alcohol to distract him from the duty of the head of the house. Bereft of wage labour, these men become dependent on their house members for food, and on their kin for alcohol. Ironically, the unemployed are more intensely associated with houses in terms of the duration of time spent in them.

Apart from that, for an unemployed man, work for kin without a proper wage is distinct from doing work, or *twa lavai*. In some cases, wages are paid to him, whereas in others payments are pocket money for tobacco, betel nuts or alcohol. It seems that a man is inclined to take work for kin to be coterminous with doing domestic chores (*twa tomatoma*) in that it is just the obligation between kin. Again, the identity of the head of a house is closely bound up with the possession of a waged job, which cannot be substituted for the performance of work such as help to kin. By implication, this means the rupture between wage labour and help, at least on the part of an unemployed man.

Even though Rukai elders who did not have paid work to do showed their worries towards their unemployed adult children (men in particular), they seldom considered themselves to be 'jobless'. Given that the duty of domestic sustenance belongs to married adult children, the head of a house, or the married couple in



general, is in need of paid work to care for their dependants. The elders are unburdened of caring for children, so work (garden work or temporary tasks) for them are just play, indicating more social interaction than an obligation. Yet their view as such is also in part related to the fact that the welfare policy of elderly allowances subsidised them. In Taromak, every month people aged fifty-five and over are qualified to receive an elderly person's allowance of five thousand dollars monthly (about 84 pounds sterling) from the central government, unlike their non-indigenous counterparts who have to wait till the age of sixty-five.<sup>1</sup> Many elders regarded this policy as care from the government. In this regard, elders are able to be to some extent independent of their married adult children, and do not expect adult children's care in terms of money when they stress the importance of the elderly person's allowance from the government in their life.

In addition to care from the government, kinship mutuality is what an elder can rely upon once he/she falls short of food or money for subsistence. One January afternoon in 2005, when I was chatting with Tama Gecele in front of his house, one of his unemployed female kin just came by to say a word of greeting and then directly entered his house. After a short while, this woman came out with three small plastic bags of food: vegetables, soup and rice. Putting them in her bike's basket, she said goodbye to us with a bit of 'shyness/embarrassment/shame' (*mai'y'inw*) and then left without any more words. Tama Gecele said that it is the duty of kin to care for their unemployed kin:

If one day I have no food to eat, I could go to the houses of my kin to get fed. I am never afraid of starving. My kin will feed me. I have my land [he pointing to the garden in the courtyard] to grow maize, vegetables, taro and sweet potatoes. How can I starve? As long as I live in the village, I am unlikely to starve.

Three days later, I met him at his house again, and his son just drove back in a new white car. After asking where his son had been, Tama Gecele suddenly raised his voice to push him to get a job soon because his first son was on the way. 'Stop driving your new car to have fun', said Tama Gecele, 'You cannot get fed by play'!

First of all, food is an everyday and practical substance to express the mutual assistance amongst kin to cope with unemployment in Taromak. Even though the reliance of unemployed women on kin mutuality is self-evident, those who receive help are supposed to exhibit 'shyness/embarrassment/shame' (*mai'y'inw*), that is, the

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<sup>1</sup> It is not a national pension. In Taiwan, a new pension scheme similar to that of the U.K. is still under review in parliament.



recipients cannot take help from kin for granted. If they do, the recipients would incur criticism from kin.

Given that a married man as the head of a house is the one upon whom members of his house rely, the above anecdote reveals that to a great extent a waged job makes him so. Dependence on foodstuffs from kin appears unthinkable to a married man, and to the Rukai in general as well. For a grandfather, on the contrary, both land and the generosity of kin ensure the maintenance of lives on condition that everyone lives up to kinship morality.

However, generosity (*mathiathinalre*) and the provision of care (*kado*) are not devoid of practical limitations. For instance, Tama Cayimo got hurt in his previous work on a building site several years ago, and he could not afford to build a house, so he and his wife along with their children moved into his elder brother's. In Taromak, elder siblings are thought to look after younger ones in need. Because of his injury, he only managed odd jobs to earn a little money for the living expenses of members of his house. His brother provided daily meals for all of them. But sometimes his brother complained that he was fed up that his younger brother 'entirely depends upon' (*twa tralo akelengaw*) him in that Tama Cayimo did not show any intention to feed the members of his house on his own by looking for a proper job. As I was told, the unemployed should not fail to think about the living conditions of the kinsperson who offers help. Otherwise, as he harshly commented, 'the act of taking away all the foodstuffs from the fridge of kin is just theft'.

In other words, the morality of aid from kin does not mean the entire dependence of those in need. The recipient of help should not lose considerateness or concern for the help giver. In effect, the recipient is thought to ponder over the consequence of an act, taking food from a fridge for example, from the position of the help giver. If not, the act of taking food from the house of kin would be imbued with opposite and antithetical meanings—here the code of conduct sustained for kin becomes theft by a stranger. At issue is whether or not the recipient is able to regard his/her acts by shifting to the counterpart's position.

Though money is considered to help kin in hardship as mentioned in Chapter 4, in practice, food is more prevalent and less threatening to domestic reproduction. Thus kin mutuality is manifested in the self-evident nature of giving and taking food. Nevertheless, the provision of food by kin only gives temporary relief to kin suffering unemployment. In the final analysis, the Rukai expect the government to cope with unemployment in a manner implicative of kinship morality.

## The Government as Caretaker

Prior to the presidential election in 2004, many Rukai people envisioned the victory of the former ruling party KMT, and they deeply believed that the KMT government was more adept at bringing down unemployment than the current regime. ‘The government should take care of us by offering more jobs’, remarked Tama Peleniya, who is in his late sixties. In effect, to see the government as the figure of a caretaker has been associated with the payment of various categories of tax ever since the takeover. As an essential dimension of citizenship in Taiwan, paying taxes in the Rukai context implies that the recipient (the government) is the one who possesses power to extract the produce of their labour. Thus the giver (payer) of taxes is entitled to be looked after. In what follows, I focus on how the government is imagined in relation to taxation, and then on how taxation leads the Rukai to expect the government to conduct its duty of care in economic terms.

At the outset, I describe the historical antecedents of the practice of ‘paying taxes’ (*bwaya swalo*) in Taromak. In the pre-colonial period, the payment of tribute (*bwaya swalo*) in millet to the headman served to create the hierarchical relation between the nobles (*tralriyalr’alray*) and commoners (*gawgawlre*). As stated in Chapter 3, garden produce is the embodiment of a worker’s effort, and accordingly that the headman possessed the authority to collect part of the garden produce implies partaking of part of a worker’s effort. On the other hand, the pre-colonial headman was thought to nurture the commoners for the reason that the tribute given to the headman—aside from sustaining the noble house—was to (re)distribute millet to feed people with bad harvests (Cheng 2000; Hsieh 1965). As Tina Retese from a noble house, who is in her late sixties, said: ‘The [pre-colonial] headman was meant to feed the commoners’. Similarly, the commoners took for granted that ‘the headman should care for commoners. When commoners had no millet to eat, the headman gave us [millet] from the tribute’, commented Tama Lwsege, who is in his sixties. In their imagination, a village is conceived of as an imaginary house in that the house of the headman is taken to be the common origin of all the existing houses (Cheng 2000). As the representative of the founding ancestral house, the headman took on the parent-like role whose foremost responsibility was to look after the child-like commoners. Indeed, the idiom of care (*kado*) was central to both parent-child relations and siblingship, and this remains the case today. In a similar vein, the Rukai regard the government collecting taxes from them as the figure of a caring superior.

Apart from this, the construct of the government as a caretaker is reinforced by

the measures of rule as well as the political rhetoric deployed by the former ruling party KMT, which was succeeded by the DPP (Democratic Progress Party) in 2000. For adults above thirty-five, the most vivid memory of how the KMT regime looked after them is the project of re-building the village in the aftermath of the fire in 1969. Many elders of Taromak did not hesitate to show how they deeply appreciated what the KMT government had done at that time. They even enumerated what this caring government had done: they were fed with food from the KMT; their clothes came as donations from people from other places; their physical injuries were cured by medication, and more significantly, their houses were constructed with government money.

On the part of the government, the former KMT, like the current DPP regime, tended to deploy the image of the head of a family to express its loving, caring character. At the millet harvest ritual for several years, for example, the invited governmental officials were fond of making speeches or promising that the government would never fail to look after the Rukai in terms of improving the living conditions of the Rukai in many respects, such as education, employment or a larger budget for communal activities. The often-used metaphor by government officials to describe their relations with the Rukai is that 'We are family, and so the government [at different levels] must take care of the people'.

In other words, both the ruler and the ruled put emphasis upon the centrality of kinship in the constitution of their relations. As a result, the government as a caretaker is created through the cultural construct of a power-holder in terms of kinship morality, and on the other hand, it is associated with Rukai people's historical experience of what the government has done for them with respect to their everyday life.

However, the payment of taxes also implies impositions and coercion from the government in that the Rukai know well that every one is obliged to make tax payments, otherwise they will be penalised with fines. Indeed, income tax is very much complained about in Taromak, especially when the unemployed are worried about how to pay their bills for water and electricity as well as for their car licences and fuel. Managing to pay these *swalo*/tribute/taxes/bills concerns the Rukai greatly in their everyday life. In May 2004, for instance, Tina Mwlese kept on grumbling about how much income tax she had to pay while we were doing embroidery:

Why does the government tax my wage? Whenever the time for paying taxes comes, I have to worry about where to find so much money for taxes. If I could pay taxes by installments, for example, the method of monthly deduction from wages, I would not

feel that I have been taxed so much.

First of all, taxation is construed as the government forcibly taking away part of what one has earned through labour, for Tina Mwlese deployed the term ‘wage’ (*sao belese*). As noted in Chapter 6, when the term ‘a wage’ is employed, it implies that the speaker accentuates a person’s effort invested in work, or the relationship between a worker and the product. In this light, taxation is quite similar to the forced extraction of the produce from a worker. To go one step further, it suggests that she casts doubt, at least at the moment of speaking, on the government’s authority and legitimacy of income taxation. This implies that the government forcibly takes over part of their efforts in work, and they are relatively powerless in the face of coercion from the government.

Interestingly, Tina Mwlese imagines or fancies a less forceful method of tax payment, such as installments, to diminish the acuteness of taxation. In Taiwan, only well-established companies and several governmental agencies deploy a mode of taxation similar to the PAYE (pay as you earn) scheme in the UK, and it is not widely familiar for a great majority of Rukai people. Her preferred method of paying tax partly has to do with how the Rukai use money in a daily situation. Several Rukai people I knew were accustomed to spend all the money at hand on domestic expenses, and certainly they seldom budgeted incomes for taxation’s sake. Even though the scheme of taxation has been in force for decades, the Rukai of different generations still suffered from taxation, especially income tax. Given the coercion of taxation, what they can do is to imagine an alternative way—which is more related to jobs with monthly salaries—of paying taxes by monthly installments as if it could alleviate their burden of paying taxes, or the feeling of being taxed. On the other hand, in their imagination, the administrative authority of taxation is in turn confirmed.

Therefore, the government as a caretaker is incorporated into the parameter of domestic relatedness through the native imagination of taxation, and thereby it is thought to live up to the morality which confers it with power. On the other hand, the government also dubs itself as having the duty of care to look after the people under its rule. Aside from that, a superior is said to have a ‘soft heart’ so that he/she is able to have pity for and care for the powerless, and this in effect suggests how asymmetry in power is alleviated, which I spell out below.



## Pitiable Commoners, Soft-Hearted Superiors

Another dimension of Rukai people's construct of the government as a caretaker is found in that the government officials are often designated as '*tangatra*', meaning 'the source, origin [of a place, a house or a village]'. Sometimes they are just called '*mabelr'eng*', which means 'the sky' or 'the above'. The percept *tangatra* primarily depicts the roots of a plant, and it refers to the beginning part of a rope, a piece of paper, a river, and fruits as well. It is redolent of the observation made by both James Fox and Clifford Sather (1996) that in many societies in Southeast Asia (Java and Timor for instance), the metaphor of the origin or source of plants or a house is fundamental to the imagination of social hierarchy, with which the Rukai share common ground. Nevertheless, here I am instead concerned with how the metaphor of origin is related to the morality of power.

In Taromak, the *tangatra* generally refers to both the headman and the head of a house. As the *tangatra*, the headman or the head of a house is thought to provide protection over, as well as attention and care for, his/her dependents. This implies that the power of a headman or the like lies in the practices of caretaking rather than mere rule in a common sense. By extension, a leader in a group (e.g., the elected village head or government official) is analogous to the *tangatra* of a house or a village, and therefore the rest of group members are entitled to ask a leader for either help or resources for the sake of their wellbeing. In effect, the Rukai ascribe the provision of care and attention to the 'soft heart' (*malro'ei kit'emetr'eme*) of the superior. When failing to do so, the superior must be termed a person with a 'hard heart' (*malrak'ete kitremetr'eme*), meaning one's heart is as hard as a stone.

The adjective *malro'ei* is used to describe how a plant, for instance, would bend when it cannot resist a force from outside. It is exactly the same for one's heart. It is believed that a good superior or power-holder is affected by the misery and hardship of the rank-and-file, and this in turn would make his/her heart soft. Based on this, an efficacious way to affect the heart of the power-holder is to make the misery and hardship known to the superior. As anticipated by the commoners, a superior's heart will accordingly turn soft as long as he/she comes to know how 'pitiable' (*kolro*) the ruled are.

This is the case for interpersonal relationships. The Rukai tend to distinguish the powerful from less powerful people in terms of the relativity of potency, which I discuss in detail in the chapter to follow. To cope with asymmetry in power, it is thought that powerful people should have a soft heart to give help to the pitiable. In the same vein, the enactment of siblingship morality to help unemployed kin is not

only based on unbreakable connectedness, but also on soft heartedness to initiate the practice of help. It should borne in mind that the powerless asking for pity or help from the powerful will not develop a sense of subjugation or submission because of the act of begging for help. Quite the opposite: the less powerful or the pitiable are entitled to ask for help from the powerful for the reason that the duty of care binds them, and thereby the asymmetry in power between them is alleviated. Nonetheless, the practice of asking pity from the powerful takes part in the reproduction of the asymmetry in that the practice of the powerless re-affirms the legitimacy of the powerful.

Indeed, my discussion of Rukai image of leadership and power is reminiscent of the studies of the notion of potency and the configuration of relations of power in insular Southeast Asia (Anderson 1972; Cannell 1999; Errington 1990; Geertz 1980; Hoskins 1985, 1986). For instance, an ideal chief in Kodi should have a soft heart to help the commoners as well as a caring character to look after the followers (Hoskins 1985, 1986). This then implies that the leadership is embodied in both the personal quality and emotion that 'having a soft heart' indicates, and how many resources a power-holder had in hand, from whence power originates.

In the Rukai context, the perception of power is not only confined to the construct of leadership but also constitutive of an important aspect of daily interpersonal interactions, reminding us of the Bicolanos of the Philippines (Cannell 1999). In Bicol, the relationships between the powerful and the powerless are dynamic on the grounds that the gap in power could be bridged by the expression of pity and love from the person of power. The powerless are granted this 'privilege' to ask for help from the powerful by describing themselves as 'pitiable'. That is, the emotions of pity and love from the superior serve to alleviate the sense of oppression, and over time draw both parties closer from the extremes of the power spectrum.

Inspired by Cannell's thesis, I suggest then that the relationship between a superior and an inferior, and between the powerful and the powerless, is dynamic rather than stark or unchangeable. The Rukai know well that the most efficient way to solve a dire situation in life is to make the superior know how pitiable they are, so that the superior's heart cannot resist their request. Most prominently, the Rukai tend to have a representative to express their helplessness or wretchedness to the real power-holder, and we shall see how this works in the next section. It merits noting that commoners should express their 'respectfulness and awe' (*thimeth'ime*) in the face of a superior, such as the headman or the officials. In this case, respectfulness and awe indicate that a commoner speaks in a humble manner and non-offensive tone, and gets properly dressed up in order not to embarrass himself or herself. Some

commoners did not think that they were eloquent or articulate enough in front of a superior, though they were so when talking to me. I too observed that a few commoners were even intimidated by speaking to a superior face to face when it came to making a request as such, whereas it seemed to be much easier for them to have drinks with a superior. In these circumstances, a representative was always needed to communicate with the superior, and the possible candidates were often the leaders of local factions.

In order to elucidate how the policy to cope with unemployment is viewed as a caring practice of the government, a case in point is the implementation of the welfare-to-work policy. In the course of its implementation, we can find how Rukai perceptions of the morality of power, the process of power, work, and relatedness, come into play and intersect with each other.

### **Duty of Care to Cope with Unemployment**

In June 2003, the central government in Taiwan launched a welfare-to-work policy to bring down the unemployment rate that was at a historic high of 5.17% for 2002, according to the official figure from the Ministry of Economy. This policy consisted in an employment scheme of increased public services, and the budget for this employment scheme came from fiscal revenues. Under the guidance of the Council of Labour Affairs, governmental agencies at different levels were responsible for the provision of short-term jobs—usually lasting six months—for the unemployed, especially the middle-aged or elderly who were capable of work. In Taronak, the jobless regarded it as a practice of care from the government so that many middle-aged as well as elderly people went to apply for job vacancies.

The majority of jobs, not surprisingly, were manual ones: street sweeping, drainage maintenance, cleaning work in the county administrative office buildings, or communal renovation tasks such as setting up flower beds in the village. According to the regulations, all the workers were only allowed to work for twenty-one working days per calendar month, and were paid a daily wage of 800 NT dollars (about 12 pounds sterling). In the individual projects, there were executives—usually the leaders of local factions capable of dealing with and communicating with the governmental officials—who were responsible for supervision. Their chief job was to ensure that workers signed up on the roster when they turned up for work.

When I had a look at the roster for a project taking place in the village, I found that every worker worked to exactly the same time schedule: being present at eight



o'clock in the morning, having a lunch break from twelve to one, coming back to work at one, and then leaving at five in the afternoon. No one was late for work or left for home earlier than the 'official labour time'. Staying in the same workplace during the official labour time, I found something worthy of further discussion. Firstly, the villagers tended to turn up earlier than eight in the morning because they had finished domestic work or other tasks. Then they left for home at around half past eleven to cook lunch for their children or grandchildren. Some people were back at work at around a quarter to one, whilst some might show up at around a quarter past one. At around a quarter to five, when they felt the day's job was done (only the workers could tell), the workers would gather to share betel nuts or soft drinks and chat together. As a male worker told me, 'I could go home when one day's job is done'. Interestingly, their Rukai supervisor did not blame them for their flexible hours. Apparently one day's job was not measured in terms of clock time, but in something more like 'task-orientation' (Thompson 1993[1967]: 358). Interestingly, it seemed that the workers tacitly perceived how much work to do for one day as part of their bodily disposition, producing what appears to be the irregularity in labour time.

What is more, the way that a local executive brings gifts (*acebe*) to workers in some projects shares a resemblance with the case of the roselle work described in Chapter 5. In the above project, for example, one day the local executive, Tama Komosanga in his late fifties, drove to the workplace with many work boots around the half-way point of the project. He announced that every worker was entitled to receive one pair as a gift, and that both he and his superior organiser were grateful for the help from all the workers. The workers were full of smiles upon his words. As described in Chapter 5, to offer workers gifts (foodstuffs or other items) during or after work not only signifies the generosity of the host or supervisor, but also to some extent alleviate the mild coercion of recruitment of labour. That is, wage labour should be performed in a manner redolent of kinship morality in terms not only of giving gifts, but also of a shared view of irregular labour time, as we see below.

To make this point, I first draw on the case of a dispute over labour time and wage payments in another public service project whose executive was Taiwanese. This Taiwanese executive secretary strictly demanded that all the Rukai workers showed up in the workplace according to the time set in the regulations. In May 2005, Tama Tiyanosa turned up for work one hour later than the set working time, but automatically extended one hour's work to make up the workload. However, this Taiwanese secretary ignored his voluntary extension of work and continued to insist that he was late for work by deducting one hour's wage from his daily pay. This



decision gave rise to intense disaffection amongst other Rukai co-workers, for they did not see anything unreasonable in extending the working time to make up the daily workload. When they made complaints to this secretary, she turned a deaf ear by emphasising that business was business. Reminiscent of the cases regarding labour time and wage labour mentioned in the preceding chapters, this case reveals that the relation between a supervisor and workers is based only on the calculation of clock time without a sense of other-regarding in terms of giving more flexibility to personal affairs. There is no trace of kinship mutuality involved.

Further, workers on this project also complained in private about the delayed payment of wages. I once asked workers why they did not go to the superior director to solve the problem of belated payment. I was struck by their answer: the belated payment had nothing to do with the superior director, who was kind and caring enough to give them jobs. On the contrary, Rukai workers ascribed these 'wrongdoings' indicative of the abuse of power to the supervisor or helper.

As mentioned above, the Rukai stress that the role of a representative like the supervisors at work is to voice the condition of the workers' lives or wants, and co-villagers are appropriate candidates for such a job. More precisely, a co-villager supervisor, representative or superior cannot easily turn down their needs or requests as a result of relatedness. In January 2004, for instance, the wages for the employment project were budgeted to be paid to the workers after Chinese New Year (in February that year), but the tasks were finished by mid-January. Without wages in hand, Rukai workers gathered to discuss from whom they should ask help. This was associated with their shared idea that workers should get a wage as soon as the work came to an end, as they did in other contracted-out jobs. Given that their wages came from the central government, the money would be transmitted via bureaucratic procedures to reach a worker's wage packet, and this procedure was constrained by the duration of the fiscal year, which is the end of January. However, Rukai workers had little knowledge about bureaucracy and were only concerned with how soon they could receive their pay.

These workers finally decided to telephone a fellow resident, Tanwbake, because he then worked in the government agency in Taipei responsible for this project, rather than going to the village head or a member of Pei-nan township council, both of whom were generally responsible for such disputes. The representative of the workers asked Tanwbake whether or not the government was able to pay them 2,000 NT dollars so that they could 'buy rice and oil for Chinese New Year'. Tanwbake explained to the workers' representative how the fixed procedure of handling money of the central government went, and that he was unable

to change this official procedure. However, this worker carried on explaining that what the other workers needed was only a small amount of money for the coming familial reunion. 'They were all poor workers', said Tanwbake, 'How can my heart become hard enough to turn them down? They are my kin'. Subsequently, Tanwbake tried consulting with his superior about drawing money from the category of the preparatory budget, which was within the limits of his superior's authority. On the last day of that fiscal year, Tanwbake got the pay cheque cashed to pay the workers.

These supervisors of employment projects, in the first place, are called 'people who assist [the superior]' (*t'aw waska'elre*). In effect, they are the mediators who transmit the administrative decisions from their superiors to the rank-and-file. Furthermore, the moral character of a superior is thought to attract these helpers in the service of power. However, in the process of the execution of power, the supervisors' wrongdoings (e.g., the case of the wage deduction) implicative of the abuse of power are taken to be their personal conduct rather than the extension of a superior's loving, caring character as a caretaker, even though it seems that the Rukai are at the mercy of this caring power. By implication, the power of a (real) superior is fundamentally caring and loving; the Rukai believe that a superior will not and should not fail them. More than that, I suggest that the power of a superior, like that of the government *per se*, cannot be immediately experienced by Rukai commoners; or precisely, a superior does not act directly so that an agent is needed to actualise his/her caring power. These helpers of a superior are the agents to put into practice the enactment of offering care and attention, by which commoners can judge whether the assumed morality of power is faithfully conducted.

On the other hand, relations with the government are also those between employers and employees in that they receive wage packets from the government. Unlike the cases of the roselle and betel vine owners, this government-employer is construed as a parenting caretaker who is expected not to fail in its duty. In this light, a wage paid to them is less profit-ridden than the case of cash cropping. It is more like a moral wage in the sense that the objective of this employment scheme and the jobs offered are intended to sustain the wage earners and their dependents. With their perception as such, nevertheless, the Rukai subsume themselves in the parameters of domestic kinship relations. This in turn inevitably intensifies their dependence upon the government or a like political superior.

Despite the fact that the employment scheme brings pay to the unemployed for domestic subsistence, it is not *the* solution to unemployment. For example, young married couples with children tended not to work on this project owing to the fact that it guarantees nothing with respect to the domestic reproduction that is their

*perennial* concern. Conversely, elders were more delighted and keen to participate in this project. Thus, those in need of paid work to look after the members of their houses hardly benefited from this project, whereas the elders welcomed and even anticipated the extension of this policy. It seems to be that elders, rather than young married couples, received moral wages from the government to foster their dependents, whilst the unemployed adults became as much dependents as their children.

## Conclusion

I have indicated that the oneness and indivisibility of siblingship underpin the practices of mutuality and help amongst kin when they lose their jobs. More prominently, unemployment makes the practice of caretaking the focal point of relatedness so that domestic reproduction relies on the help from kin. Whereas the reliance of both an unemployed woman and elders upon kinship mutuality is taken for granted, an unemployed man should find himself a paid job in order to live up to what an ideal head of a house looks like. In the light of this distinction, I have suggested that the contribution of a married couple's labour to a house starts to take on gendered forms in that the maleness of a man as the head of a house is intimately associated with wage labour.

In spite of the self-evident nature of mutuality in offering help, the Rukai maintain that the recipient of help from kin should be more other-regarding, viz., the recipients should show considerateness towards the conditions of lives of their kin by shifting to the position of their kin. Acts indicative of a lack of considerateness towards kin, such as indulgent appropriation of food from the house of kin, are condemned as selfish or showing a lack of concern for kin or others. In the same vein, a jobless man's heavy drinking evokes similar criticism of being selfish in that his obsession with alcohol prevents him from looking for a proper job for the sake of the members of his house. On the other hand, for the unemployed, alcohol is the only means to express how he has become embittered by being given the sack.

Separate from these practices of kinship mutuality, the Rukai anticipate that the government will offer them abundant jobs to tackle their economic hardship. Conceived as a caretaker, the government is thought to enact its moral obligation of looking after its subjects. Significantly, a superior like the government is thought to have a 'soft heart' with which to take pity on pitiable jobless people as long as their difficulties are made known to their superior. More prominently, the power of the

government is considered to be fundamentally caring yet non-agential. To actualise this caring power of the superior/government, a mediating agent is needed, who in turn, however, is thought to be responsible for abuses of power. This imagination of the caring power of the government paradoxically relocates the Rukai under its sovereignty, thereby intensifying their dependence upon its duty of care. For the Rukai, the provision of jobs with the payment of a moral wage through the employment scheme represents the actualisation of the caring power of the government. In addition to the affirmation of the salience of siblingship, my examination of Rukai people's experience of unemployment reveals how the government and its policy are imagined in both kinship and economic terms.

In looking at how Rukai people cope with unemployment, I suggest that emotional disturbance is part of their experience of wage labour, which is the subject matter of the following chapter; at the same time, I focus on how wage labour has an impact at the level of both individual persons and the conjugal relationship.



## Chapter 8

### The Afflictions of Labour

With the examination of unemployment in the last chapter, it was revealed that wage labour is closely bound up with domestic reproduction. This might lead one to conclude that, overall, the Rukai have accommodated the logic of the capitalist economy in spite of their everyday resistance to wage labour. However, that is only part of the story of their encounter with capitalism. Let us consider how they think of wage labour. In Chapter 6, for instance, I noted that Rukai men tend to construe wage labour as toil with the wage seen as 'bitter money', and that female elders recollected how pressing wage labour appeared to them as well. This description of the harshness and bitterness of wage labour coexists with their view of identifying it with the expression of a man's duty of care, thereby contributing to domestic reproduction. Thus, the following questions immediately arise. Under what circumstances is work practice, being vital to the sustenance of a house, experienced as suffering? How is this conflicting representation of work interpreted? What do Rukai people do in the face of suffering? Finally, what is the significance of these acts undertaken to cope with their distress?

To address these issues, I first investigate how a range of work practices, including housework, garden work, and wage labour are respectively experienced and construed. I chiefly focus on women's accounts and practices, partly because I have described men's experiences in Chapters 3, 4 and 7, and how the interpretation of wage labour as toil is bound up with their historical experiences of work in factories or on building sites, as well as that of exploitation. Above all, the significance of my concern with women's experiences, aside from a methodological reason as well as the gender role of the author, hinges upon the indigenous construct of a couple as an ungendered whole, whereby domesticity is established. Thus, I present how the other part of the married couple or members of a house feels and experiences wage labour via mutual interactions in an attempt to examine the mutual construction of domesticity and capitalism at a different level.

Separate from the experiential side, what attracts my attention is that the Rukai account for their experience of work, alongside other forms of social interaction, in the idiom of relative potency/power, even in the conjugal relationship. Notably,

experience of wage labour in terms of exploitation is especially considered to be the cause of bodily afflictions, in accordance with the view that afflictions are often identified with the defeat of one's guardian spirit (*lekem*) in an encounter with a powerful other. It is suggested that bodily afflictions in effect embody social relations and relations of power/exploitation in which the less powerful engage. It is thus understandable why non-Christian Rukai people emphatically ascribe illness to their economic predicaments, whilst Rukai Christians attend charismatic healing practices to heal their afflictions from labour.

As a consequence, I argue that the representation of the experience of work in the capitalist economy involves the interplay of notions and practices concerning personhood, relations, potency/power, and agency. Accordingly, I further argue that Rukai people's participation in charismatic healing practices is tantamount to an 'implicit form' of resistance, as Jean Comaroff (1985: 4) coins it, to the coercive power of capitalism.

### The Undertone of a Sense of Pride

Tina Midoriya, who is in her sixties, has owned a farm of Chinese toon trees (*Toona sinensis*) since her husband retired in 1985. In Taitung, it was not until about two decades ago that the shoots of Chinese toon trees (see Plate 8.1) became a cash crop; several families in Taromak have since followed Tina Midoriya in growing Chinese toon. When freshly-cut, these green shoots are sent to the supermarkets run by the regional agricultural association, as their aroma goes well with meat cuisine. Owing to the difficulty in preserving fresh shoots, Tina Midoriya and her husband started to dry the green shoots with the help of the abundant sunshine in this area, and thereby other related products have been created. The wide range of products made of dried Chinese toon shoots includes: chopped shoots which are usually made into herb tea; Chinese toon paste, which when made with dried red chillies and sesame oil, is a popular spice for a variety of dishes; and other newly launched products are Chinese toon dried noodles and frozen dumplings, albeit the amount of their production is far smaller than the former two products.

The work on a Chinese toon farm needs to be done manually: planting seedlings, applying the fertiliser, trimming boughs and leaves, and hand picking shoots for sale. Amongst these, the timing for hand picking shoots directly correlates with their price on the market. The ideal and also preferable season of a year is, generally speaking, the month of April, while in other seasons the textures of shoots becomes less tender,



Plate 8.1 The field of Chinese toon trees

in which case the price will go down and produce less profit. For the farmers, the optimal timing for hand picking toon shoots is at dawn when the shoots are still full of moisture and remain tender, as demanded by the agricultural association. In order to live up to this requirement, Tina Midoriya and her husband devised a method of storing the tender shoots in water-absorbent paper; she is proud of this because her toon shoots are much to the liking of the agricultural association in Taitung. Unlike the other owners of Chinese toon farms in Taromak, Tina Midoriya has never hired wage workers for hand picking shoots. As she said, 'We are accustomed to getting up very early in the morning, so it is not hard to hand pick shoots by ourselves'. Another reason is that some owners either keep their jobs of wage labour or run a grocery store at the same time, and hence they have to hire villagers to hand pick shoots.

In spite of her pride in the success of growing Chinese toon, however, Tina Midoriya confesses that it is tiring and exhausting to get up for work at dawn, or often at the dead of midnight. However she firmly insists that she is still able to work so that no wage workers are needed. As noted in Chapter 7, men of Taromak are thought to do wage labour for house expenditure, but obviously she does not regard work on the farm as her husband's work alone. 'If I don't do this task, then who will do it on my behalf? That is what a couple should share', she remarked. Her words hark back to the fact that a married couple is seen as an ungendered whole in terms of doing garden work, as described in Chapter 2, whether for rice or cash crops. Aside from that, her insistence on doing both garden work and domestic chores still comes to tire her from time to time, though she thinks that it is not to blame.

Another dimension of her insistence has to do with her relations with members of her house. Tina Midoriya is one of the few women in Taromak whose marriage was not arranged by parents. She met her husband, who was a teacher at a high school then, but her parents strongly opposed their union due to the fact that he did not have any assets. They thought that she deserved better because she was well-educated (she had a high school diploma) and talented. She did not obey her parents and insisted on marrying him. During my fieldwork, I found that her husband sometimes helped her with domestic chores and also looked after their then four-year-old granddaughter. In addition to her success in the Chinese toon business, she loves to mention that her children are well-educated and subsequently have been offered good jobs, and above all, that they do not bring shame to her house. Compared to some women in arranged marriages who complain a lot about the members of their houses, as we see in what follows, she demonstrates more of a sense of pride than one of grievance towards both her work and house members.

Though they can afford workers to lessen the burden of work, what Tina



Midoriya puts emphasis on is that, in addition to the capability of work, a couple's collaboration can secure income which belongs to them without deductions for the employment of wage workers. For the sake of a sufficient cash income, she must take up the hard work of both garden labour and domestic chores, and conversely her sense of pride is shown. Indeed, her sense of pride in the practice of work comes from a mixture of skill, hard work and the morally good behaviour of the members of her house, and is something which many Rukai women share.

### Potency to Create Moral Domesticity

In Taromak, the reason for women to do domestic chores is that men are thought to be 'powerful' (*makec'eng*) in terms of physical strength while women are relatively less powerful, though most of the time the idioms of mutual affection and compatibility are highlighted to describe the ideal conjugal relationship, as noted in Chapter 2. Despite the fact that a couple should collaborate in garden work, men from time to time would do domestic chores by performing errands, such as carrying heavy sacks of rice or taro, buying bottles of cooking alcohol from a grocery store, or doing the plumbing. For the most part, it is more common to find that women stay in their houses to take the responsibility of housework.

Intriguingly enough, during my fieldwork, I also observed that some men minded babies on the occasion of village meetings or weddings when their wives were busy in shift work. When we came to this issue in our chats, some women told me that it is because these women are 'potent' (*makec'eng*, powerful and of prowess) enough to make their husbands mind the babies on such occasions. That is, a woman can have the possibility of gaining more potency so as to make her husband do the tasks designated to her. A Rukai woman's potency cannot be clearly discerned until her husband is made to mind the baby. This implies that relations of power in the conjugal relationship appear both dynamic and processual due to practices considered to empower oneself, such as education or work, rather than unchangeable and permanent conditions.

In effect, Rukai people's reference to the idioms of both power and intimacy (mutual affections) to describe the conjugal relationship is very redolent of the Bicolanos of the Philippines. According to Fennella Cannell (1999), the Bicolanos think of the conjugal relationship in terms of potency, and inequality will be lessened when the more potent one (usually the wife) takes pity on (as a practice indicative of intimacy) the powerless one (the husband) (1999: 42, 46, 228, 254). It is the dynamic

process of relational power between two parties (being strangers, showing reluctance, approaching, taking pity on the other, and then creating intimacy) that constitutes the processual construct of conjugal relationships.

What is more, I was very much struck by the comment from a woman of a noble house when she unintentionally mentioned that the head of another noble house performed domestic chores like cooking or minding the children while at home. Instead of stressing the potency of the wife of this man from a noble house, she paid compliments to his deeds as such and commented on him as a 'nice man' (*sawalray masalr'ilri*, literally, a man with good looks or a nice character). Indeed several female elders would sometimes come to the topic of how their male kin were good at housework, as if this revealed their nice character. It merits noting that men would receive compliments due to their performance of domestic chores, whilst their wives would be said to be more powerful. Conversely, the women's performance of domestic chores is thought to be what they should do, and certainly no particular attention or praise is given to them.

As regards those men who minded babies at these gatherings, they do not show any embarrassment or feel ashamed by this practice. This suggests that there is no so-called 'husband's work' or 'wife's work' in respect to domestic chores. 'Members of a house (*lama sakacegelre*, denoting real members of a house and only referring to a married couple) should help each other', a middle-aged man said. Their comment reminds me of how elders answered my irksome question about the sexual division of labour in the gardens, albeit in a different context.

Interestingly, several young unmarried women very much approve of this tendency by remarking, 'I make money as men do. So why should he not do domestic chores as I do?' It seems that their economic conditions are thought to empower them to gain more potency over their husbands in terms of sharing housework. The cases I know indicate that it is easier for women with proper jobs to do so (become more potent), and they are more inclined to think of sharing domestic chores in terms of 'equality' via the expression of mutuality in the conjugal relationship. Nevertheless, the view that domestic chores are what married women should do still prevails.

How women's association with domestic chores is downplayed amongst the Rukai is no less obvious than in the case where women identify their work of embroidery, which earns them wages, with domestic chores, as noted in Chapter 3. It often seems to me that their attitude towards their work at home reveals merely the banality of domestic chores, and in turn its triviality means that it cannot be as significant as wage labour, despite the fact that the money earned is identical in terms

of the face value. Women's performance of domestic chores remains as the mute foundation of assumed everydayness and taken-for-grantedness immanent in daily life, which is ingrained in perceptions of the life world.

For some female elders, the sense of tiredness would be exacerbated by the fact that they were forced to accept their husbands through arranged marriage, which was very common till the early 1980s. These women would express their reluctance to do domestic chores because they were forced into marriage, and they feel that most of the time in their lives has been dedicated to tasks of caring for *others*, like their husbands and children, instead of for their own. For a moment, it seems that these Rukai women are on the edge of developing a sense of self-regard rather than being other-regarding as they are usually. Nonetheless, such a feeling is transient for they usually soon resume their daily routines.

However, the misconduct of their husbands and children often brings forth a wife/mother's disappointment. Their misconduct leads a wife to reflect upon what a husband and children give her in return for what she does, that is, doing domestic chores seems to be an exchange for the integrity of a house. What infuriates a Rukai mother is that their children's conduct of committing theft, fraud, murder, or adultery is thought to bring shame to her house. Most of the time, a woman poignantly voices her grievance and fury when her husband has turned out to be good-for-nothing, squanders money on alcohol, becomes a philanderer, has a mistress, or, the absolute worst, engages in physical abuse and violence. In Taromak, it is physical violence rather than adultery or extra-marital affairs (e.g., south India, see Busby 2000: 197-201) that would make a wife come to an immediate decision to divorce, which would be backed up by the kin of her side as well. Physical violence, I suggest, offers an example to see how the marital union is perpetuated with regard to the balance of the asymmetry in power in the conjugal relationship, on which I elaborate below.

Seen from this perspective, misconduct of members of a house is taken to be a practice of malevolence which destroys the morality on which a house is founded. At the same time, the doing of domestic work is as much an expression of its moral foundation as are the deeds of the members. In other words, the maintenance of a house is not only dependent on money and proper jobs, but also on the morally good behaviour of its members. More significantly, women take the latter to be a return for their practice of domestic chores; namely, the performance of housework is imagined as working upon the deeds of the members, and as the making of moral domesticity.

Nonetheless, these women in need of help only express their predicament or distress to their female kin or intimates at their gatherings. These intimates would also offer financial assistance, if they could manage to, or emotional comfort to them.



We shall see how the feeling of tiredness and exhaustion in a house are translated into burdens in the pages to follow.

## **Bodily Wellbeing in Exchange for a Wage**

Chatting over dinner in 2004, I unintentionally raised my work experience with betel vines, and my foster mother warned me that I had to be very careful, for the insecticide was poisonous. She mentioned that when she and her friends had worked in the betel vine gardens several years ago, and then that they were appalled at the doses of the insecticide. Talking about their experiences in hand picking leaves, for instance, Tina Lesema, a veteran worker in her late fifties, expressed her anxiety about her deteriorating health when working with betel vines:

I did that for several years, for the wages were quite high. It took a lot of chemical fertiliser and insecticide to care for these leaves bi-weekly. My co-workers and I wore full-covered masks in order not to breathe in too many chemicals. All the chemicals just stayed in the tent, and that must do harm to bodies. Working in betel vines was noxious to my body. Some employers even demanded that we hand pick leaves three days after the application of chemicals. Generally, it took a one-week interval to diminish the residual chemicals on the leaves to a harmless degree. My co-workers and I were appalled at the employer's decision. The leaves were noxious and poisonous. They did us harm. After I quit, I never chewed betel nuts with leaves. My tongue felt slightly numb, and the juice from the leaves hurt the corners of my mouth.

Tina Lwmana, a former worker with betel vines, described her work experience:

Every morning when I pulled the gate of the black tent, I smelled the chemicals and felt that I could hardly breathe. I told to myself that I had to work for the members of my house. And I continued to hand pick leaves for three years. One day, I felt very ill, and I did not know why. I asked for sick leave from the boss. I was stout and healthy before I started to hand pick leaves. From that day on, I made up my mind to quit. Hand picking leaves gave me much money. But I became ill.

The veteran workers exhibited their lack of interest in making more wages by doing a noxious job only after they realised the potential harm of their work. Indeed, the experience of wage labour as bodily affliction or the weakening of one's health is not



unique to the Rukai. For example, Michael Taussig (1980) observes that work in a sugar cane plantation is thought to make a person both skinny and sick for the reason that work with sugar cane means making a contract with devil. John and Jean Comaroff (1987) note that Tswana wage workers complained that the heavy workload in the diamond mines made them feel fatigue and exhausted, and the case is very similar for both the Walo wage workers in Melanesia (Sillitoe 2006) and the tin miners in Bolivia (Nash 1993). Given the widely shared experience of wage labour as suffering, we in turn need to ask the following questions. How is the case of Rukai wage workers unique with regard to our understanding of workers' lived experience of wage labour? What does the workers' particular expression of labour afflictions disclose with respect to the nature of capitalism in a local context?

The workers with betel vines consider the experience of wage labour to sicken them because of the overdose of chemicals in the workplace and also the pressing work pace because the owner feels the pressure of paying daily wages to the worker, as noted in Chapter 6. In effect, the pressing work pace is grounded in the mechanism of wage payment, where a worker's daily workload assumes a commodity wage form, one defining feature of capitalism as Marx (1976[1867]) demonstrates. For the Rukai, the measures of extracting more produce or exploitation, both the payment of the daily wage and the sensitivity to labour time in this case, are apprehended in the idiom of bodily afflictions. What is more, chemicals used in the betel vine gardens are not merely chemicals, for the betel vine workers know too well the reason why the owner abuses the chemicals, to wit, the purpose is to extract more produce within a short period of time. The chemicals may be noxious in themselves, but they become seriously noxious when their employers abuse them for profit's sake. Viewed from this perspective, the expression of how chemicals bring harm to the workers' bodies not only arises from people's understanding of the physical nature of the chemicals, but also results from the practice of applying chemicals unduly, which is in essence driven by the owner's intention to extract more produce, namely, the act of exploitation. This is an experiential construction of the capitalist economy.

At another level, the workers' account of bodily afflictions is in accordance with the fact that the Rukai address the cause of illness by reference to the relativity of potency between two confronting parties. Let me spell out first how social interaction or confrontation is construed amongst the Rukai. A young baby, for example, is thought to be vulnerable to the environment, especially when it is brought to the gardens or to occasions of mourning, where ancestral spirits and other spirits are lively. Once brought to these places, a baby would get ill, for example by crying

non-stop or getting frightened. It is said that its guardian spirit (*lekem*) is weaker than the ancestral spirits, and then when the ancestral spirits meet the baby in the garden, for instance, they might come to talk to it, but unintentionally carry away its left shoulder spirit (*abake vilri*).<sup>1</sup> The parents will ask a female spirit medium (*siya elr'eng*) to summon back its shoulder spirit. Interestingly, since most Rukai female spirit mediums have converted to Christianity, though some of them are still possessed or able to feel the spirits, many Rukai parents take their frightened babies or children to the Puyuma spirit mediums to summon back their shoulder spirits. As I was told, Rukai spirit mediums in the past would perform the rite of *aivivigi*, in which the female spirit medium used an areca nut to 'invite the ancestral spirit to stay away' (*asa-lrisi wthithilri*) so that the shoulder spirit was able to return. Nonetheless, even now when female elders bring babies to the garden they always have a working knife (*hahao*, usually used by women) in the baby's carrying basket, aside from its instrumentality, in order to strengthen its guardian spirit.

As for adults, their guardian spirits will grow stronger but their bodily wellbeing is never securely safeguarded from the menace of their peers, neighbours or co-workers. If peers who are jealous of their capability intend to weaken or defeat them, one common and efficacious way is to ask a spirit medium to exert sorcery (*asa lisi*) by areca nuts. This demands another spirit medium to identify the inflictor, and annul the sorcery.

Above all, travelling far away from Taromak is considered to be quite threatening, for the place beyond the village (*baza*) is seen as full of danger and malevolence. It is believed that places away from the village are replete with unknown and malevolent forces, whereas a house is thought to be a haven for its members. Therefore, when members of a house are about to leave for other towns or travel afar, the elders of a house, regardless of sex, would perform the rite of 'strengthening the guardian spirit' (*asi lekem*) to safeguard members. The rite is quite simple: the elder just blows upon the top of the head of that member, and then improvises words (actually no incantation) in the hope that he/she will have a strong guardian spirit and not be defeated by other spirits (*kiya lekem*, having one's guardian spirit defeated). In other words, the illness caused is thought to be due to the relative vulnerability of one's spiritual potency compared to that of the confronting party.

Here we encounter the image of the body serving as a site in which social

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<sup>1</sup> It is said that a person has a spirit on each shoulder. The right one is more stable than the left one, so that the left one is easily taken away by other stronger spirits when they confront one another. The right one will not leave the body until the moment of death.

relations—along with relations of production—come to manifest themselves, the theme of which is common in the anthropological literature (cf. Bourdieu 1977; Comaroff 1985; Mauss 1973[1935]). Specifically, I would suggest that Rukai people's concern with human bodies and its disorders is actually an expression of 'relations of potency'. As many scholars, such as Benedict Anderson (1972), Shelly Errington (1989, 1990), and Fennella Cannell (1999), point out, in insular Southeast Asia the notion of potency is crucial to understand the nature of power and politics, gender constructs and the dynamics of making social relationships, and exactly the same is true for the Rukai.

In Taromak, the notion of potency accounts both for the origin of the power that a noble house possesses and for the marking gender difference, as noted earlier. What needs to be borne in mind is that the notion of potency in the Rukai context is neither a substance imbued with power, nor is it measured with material resources in the hand of a power-holder. The Rukai notion of potency, sharing its salience with the cases of the Java and Luwu of Indonesia (Anderson 1972; Errington 1990), puts emphasis upon its fluctuation in amount, that is, potency could be strengthened by the infusion of a more powerful source and, at the same time, each social encounter is destined to cause the loss of energy, whether it be from the more powerful side or less powerful one. It is no surprise that the Rukai are inclined to construe the relations of production in terms of the relative strength of power, in which case power as coercion takes part as well. In this light, I would argue that the bodily afflictions not only embody social relations in somatic terms, but also indicate the lack of potency of the afflicted in relation to the inflictors.

### **Empowered to Imagine**

Lumiya, a lone mother in her late thirties, has been made unemployed several times from different workplaces. Though her mother hoped that she would take over their family restaurant, she showed little interest because she would not be better paid at home. Besides, she does not lead a normal family life because her mother did not regard her partner, who has a liking for alcohol, as an ideal marriage partner for Lumiya, even though their child is already at primary school. With her partner's remittance, though not on a regular basis due to the insecure income of his piece-rate job on the building site, Lumiya manages to live from hand-to-mouth without financial aid from kin. The main reason for Lumiya being sacked from her previous jobs is that her Taiwanese employers were very strict about the shift work regulations,



such as turning up fifteen minutes earlier than the scheduled work time, or being stringent about the leaves of absence by threatening to deduct wages. She often showed her resentment towards her employer in front of me. Yet she loved to mention the employers of her cousins as a contrast to hers. According to her, her cousins' employers, some Taiwanese and others indigenous people, are extremely nice not only because they were generous in giving a bonus on holidays, but also because they were flexible about the time to turn up for work when her cousins were constrained by their children's illness.

Soon after leaving her last job, she often felt dizzy and even had breathing problems, and also fell into emotional depression, not to mention that she had made several failed attempts to commit suicide. In 2003, upon her brother's advice, she decided to have a health check-up to sort out the cause. The doctor diagnosed her with both high blood pressure and bi-polar depression, the former of which caused her dizziness. Then the doctor comforted her by remarking that bi-polar depression was very common nowadays, for many people in the cities have got it. To my surprise, she has not obviously shown any negative emotions towards the diagnosis of depression since, in contrast to other similar cases in Taiwan. Back home, she was cooperative enough to take medication and pay attention to her dietary habits. However, interestingly, I was struck by her own account of her illness:

... He [the doctor] suggested that I keep my mind up by thinking of something positive...it must be brought out by that I am now out of any job! I think it must be so. You see, when I had jobs to do earlier, I *never* had the problem of being bi-polar! Once out of work, I wore myself out for my kid's tuition fees and living expenses. I cannot do without money. The father of my kid just sent me a little money, as he sometimes spent it on alcohol with his friends, though I had warned him...I think my bi-polar will go away as long as I find a good job again. I believe it will disappear then.

In her account, her illness is the result of unemployment, but we find the underlying reason is that she could not bear her ex-employers' exacting measures of work regulations, and the rule on labour time in particular. Her grievances about her ex-employers reveal that she recognises the superior's abuse of power when she compared her case with those of her kin, whose employers are more like a caretaker, as noted in Chapter 6, who is generous and compassionate due to his/her 'soft heart'. To see an employer as a caretaker means to acquiesce in one's lack of power in relation to the employer, and the subordinate is thought to ask for help from the powerful. The recognition of the other's potency for the Rukai is only made possible



through a myriad of interactions and confrontations, from daily talks to election campaigns. If a person finds himself or herself less powerful, he or she can either make use of spirit mediumship to defeat the opponent, or ask for help from the powerful by admitting his or her lack of power.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the spell of depression is indeed the embodiment of capitalist relationships as articulated, and it is thought to be redressed by being offered a decent job rather than by medication. Taken altogether, the experience of wage labour is apprehended in both the idiom of the relativity of power and that of human bodies as the site of social relations.

More strikingly, the desired jobs in Lumiya's mind are those which provide a monthly salary, health insurance, and bonuses on national holidays like Chinese New Year or the mid-autumn festival, all of which are common benefits in most companies, factories, and government agencies across Taiwan. Her greatly-desired job is the position of clerk in a government agency for the sake of the retirement pension. She clearly expressed her reluctance to do piece rate work, 'I need a permanent job to make enough money for my kid and to build my own house'.

This case unambiguously indicates that given the embodiment of capitalist relations, the measures to repair her ailing body and distress involve both medication and, in the imagination of a non-Christian, wage labour. Unlike many middle-aged and elderly Rukai people who still prefer to work as piece rate workers for the sake of kinship obligations, what Lumiya portrays as an ideal is a wage worker in every aspect—a free labourer who sells her labour power (wages paid to her according to the period of time she invests in tasks) and enjoys the benefits of a proper position.

On the other hand, Lumiya's imagination of her much-desired work in turn discloses that she lays the priority of waged work above her social connectedness on the grounds that the former is thought to make possible the creation of her own house, a symbol of making relatedness in Taromak. As indicated in Chapter 4, the sustenance of a house should be secured in the first place, insofar as the making of relatedness in Taromak is closely associated with the symbolism of a house. Yet, the prominence of a house in her vision of the future is bound up with (a desired kind of) wage labour. Being a powerless unemployed woman, she conceives the acquisition of an ideal job to be the bedrock to realise her dream of the future: the ability to raise a child in a carefree environment, and a house for shelter. That is to say, to work with

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<sup>2</sup> This may shed fresh light upon our understanding of how the Rukai dealt with colonial superiors. For example, during both Dutch and Japanese colonial rule, the Rukai headman would organise petty insurgencies to attack the regime, and then they would become subjects after they had been pacified by colonial military force (Nakamura 2002; HOAA Vol. 4: 345). Similarly, the Rukai also adopt the relativity of potency to explain their social relationships with the Puyuma, an Austronesian-speaking people in the neighbourhood of Taromak.

the better conditions, as if a cure-all for her depression, is taken to empower her to imagine her life world to come.

So far, I have shown that the relative potency of confronting parties is involved in Rukai people's account and interpretation of work experiences in different realms, as is the experiential aspect of a work practice in terms of physical disorder. However, the above discussion only reveals the synchronic side of such explanations and attribution. For the Rukai, equal weight should be paid to the diachronic side of their current illness and lack of potency, both of which are connected with the past practices and biographies of ancestors. A case in point is that the Rukai attend Christian charismatic healing practices to have their illness and sufferings from wage labour healed.

### **Delivering From Afflictions of Labour**

In Taromak, laypersons of the Presbyterian Church are keen on charismatic practices in the form of devout prayers in the hope to experience 'being infused with the Holy Spirit'. Their common belief in the power of prayers can be traced back to several senior converts' experience of attending a one-week activity to experience the power of saying prayers in a cloister named Mount of Prayers—which was established by a local Baptist sect in Taiwan—around 1966. As they recall, during this week, what they did all day long was just say prayers to God and listen to the sermons, with a simple breakfast and water between meals. With their extraordinary experience, these Rukai converts felt that their minds were far clearer than ever, for they experientially felt the moment with Christ. They therefore considered that devout prayers in turn possessed the power to fight against any evil.

In fact, in the wake of charismatic movements within Christianity (especially Roman Catholic) (Coleman 2000; Csordas 1944), charismatic experiences of Christianity in several Protestant sects have occupied a focal position in the religious life of people ranging from North America (Csordas 1994), the Pacific islands (Olson 2001; Robbins 2001a, 2001b, 2004; Stewart & A. Strathern 2001), to Europe (e.g., Swede) (Coleman 2000). In Taiwan, as informally interviewing some Chinese Presbyterian deacons or pastors, I enquired into their opinions regarding the practice of charismatic healing or charismatic experiences such as dreaming or speaking in tongues. To my surprise, they obviously adopted a negative attitude towards the influence of charismatic movements amongst the congregation, for they held the view that the over emphasis on charismatic experience would prevent lay people

from spiritual commitment by means of both reading the Bible and inner reflection. Though Rukai priests did not perform healing practices in public, they seldom, at least to my knowledge, underestimated the significance of charismatic practices.

Certainly Catholic laypersons also went for charismatic healing, and the situation was quite similar to the case of the Presbyterian Church. In February 2005, for instance, I attended a biennial event of charismatic healing for all the Catholics of Taitung, and the venue was a school stadium in order to accommodate about four to five hundred people.

At this two-day gathering, the leading lay devotee, who has organised similar charismatic activities in the United States for more than a decade, had several fellow devotees to help him in giving sermons and saying prayers through speaking in tongues. In their testimonies, charismatic experiences such as speaking in tongues, trembling, weeping and wailing were considered to be indicative of the coming of the Holy Spirit. At the end of each day's session, the leading lay devotee announced that, prior to healing practices, supplicants were required to confess their sins to the Fathers in the hope of having them absolved. Then, the leading devotee first gathered several experienced laypersons to say prayers in order to feel the infusion of Holy Spirit, and these experienced devotees then took charge of saying prayers in tongues for participants. Throughout the entirety of the prayers, the leading devotee, standing on a rostrum, continued to speak in tongues and through the microphone his voice filled the stadium. The process of healing went in the following way. The healers just went to the supplicant, and put a hand on either the head or the shoulder to say prayers. A novice healer sometimes needed a more experienced one to join him/her. I witnessed many supplicants trembling, rotating their bodies, weeping, wailing or even fainting at the moment of healing. They were made to rest on their chairs or lie on the floor, that is, 'repose in God's arms'.

My initial intention in attending this event was to observe why Catholics went for charismatic healing and how it was done, in an attempt to compare it with my observation of similar practices in the Presbyterian Church in the year of 2003. However, the practice of confession to the clergy makes my interrogation of the content of confession an ethical issue. As a consequence, I decided to focus on the case of the Presbyterian Church on the grounds that converts articulately share their distress with their peers.

### *Transmission of illness through relatedness*

In October 2003, the women's association of the Presbyterian Church held a gathering for the sake of 'spiritual uplift', as the official leaflet put it, and indeed this



gathering was for the purpose of charismatic healing. This is an annual activity of the Synod of Eater Paiwan, which is composed of several churches in nearby villages, and the church of Taromak hosted this event that year. In the opening sermon, the Rukai priest from the church of Ilrila emphasised that, compared to men, women have a greater need to be delivered by means of the healing of Christ due to their accumulation of pressure at home. Once the women's sufferings and pressure were delivered, he assured us, the entire house would be released from the bondage of illness and distress. In particular, he drew on biblical references to explain why the idea that one's affliction is connection with kin is compatible with Rukai notions of 'transmission' (*macwng'olre*, also meaning 'taking after' or 'having a resemblance') of sin, blessing, and habits by virtue of relatedness to ancestors and kin.<sup>3</sup> His account obviously plays out the view noted in Chapter 2 in a slightly different way: a person is imagined as a site of relatedness in that ancestors' talents, personality, and bodily dispositions gather to make a person a site encompassing sets of relatedness.

To deliver people from these afflictions and sufferings, the priest later spoke of the power of the crucifix to exert purification and salvation upon laypersons, and announced that it was because 'the work of Christ on the crucifix means to annul the work of sin'. In other words, the crucifix is taken to be a symbol of power to fight against and exorcise the evil of lay people's wrongdoings. Indeed, the themes concerning the curing and healing of afflictions and the spiritual renewal of persons are shared amongst Pentecostal and charismatic Christian groups in other areas such as the Pacific islands (Robbins 2001b, 2004) and North America (Csorda 1994).

Before the commencement of the healing practice, all the participants were divided into groups—on average eight to nine people in each group—for comfortable communication in which participants should share with others their sin and sufferings. In the group I was in, two people came from other villages mainly composed of the Paiwan, another indigenous people, but I only describe below the cases of Rukai people in Taromak, including those in other groups. The priest assigned to each group a leader, who is usually a deacon or an elder in the church, for they are believed to be more devout than other laypersons. In this multiethnic Christian group, Mandarin became the *lingua franca*.

After the self-introductions, the appointed leader Hanisa, who is a deacon in the church of Taromak, asked the participants to share their thoughts about the

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<sup>3</sup> The scripture to which the priest referred is from Deuteronomy, and it reads: 'Because he loved your ancestors and, after them, chose their descendants, he has brought you out of Egypt...to make way for your and to give your their country as your heritage...Keep his laws and commandments as I give them to you today, so that you and your children after you may prosper and live long in the country that Yahweh your God is giving you forever' (4: 37-40)



misfortunes or illnesses that they and their families faced. The first to talk was Mafisa, who is in her late forties, and she mentioned that her great grandmother often took her ailing children and grandchildren to a spirit medium for treatment. This practice was taken to connect Mafisa's parents and grandparents with both God and pagan spirits; that is, this practice to do with idolatry strengthens Mafisa's assurance that her grandmother's performance of spirit mediumship is to blame for the chronic illnesses, such as high blood pressure or heart disease, to be found amongst her kin, including Mafisa herself. She then attributed her heart disease to both her mother's sister and her mother's mother. In her testimony, she said, 'I hope to cut off the link between me and spirit mediumship so that my mind would come to the rescue', and she concluded, 'The Lord God's grace, I believe, will multiply because of my determination to undo any linkage with evil'.

Not unexpectedly, a similar pattern of tracing one's current sufferings to the wrongdoings of kin and forebears occurred repeatedly in the following testimonies. For instance, Dalaita, in her late fifties, spoke of the marital problems amongst her kin. 'My grandmother neglected her husband and insisted on living her life in her way. This brought her divorce and then re-marriage. My siblings also faced the same problem', she said to the sound of sobbing. 'I am worried about my son because he and his wife have not come to terms with each other. Meanwhile, my son is out of work now, and his family can hardly carry on if no money is given to him. He turned to alcohol after he lost his job. I am afraid that they will follow my grandparents' path. Does God possess the power to make them mutually compatible again?' She could not stop crying while she spoke, and that had the other group members in tears.

Narniya, in her forties, said that she, her sister, her mother and children suffered from angiomas, benign tumours consisting of small blood vessels and possibly being located anywhere on the body, and that she identified her grandfather's practice of headhunting as the cause of the illness. In the meantime, her family has become dependent on a meagre amount of money from kin since her husband was laid off several months ago. Then, Poliva, who in her late thirties, spoke of her grandmother who was a spirit medium, good at healing rites to cure her grandchildren and others, and said that she was one amongst the cured. She thought her disobedience to her seniors was caused by her connections with pagan spirits through spirit mediumship. Moreover, Poliva and her husband were currently separated because he fell victim to alcoholism, which is taken to be another occurrence of the separation that several of her kin faced. She currently made a living from several odd jobs to feed her children, and her body thereby got tired out almost every day.

After the sharing of individual family histories, the group leader, Hanisa,

concluded that a woman is the central beam of a house; when women were delivered from their sufferings, the members of their houses would accordingly be cured through their deliverance. She encouraged these women to lead their house members to approach deliverance and be healed by Christ, rather than just accept these difficulties and miserable situations as they were. Then, she adopted the metaphor of 'a chain of repetitive sin and illness' to describe the ever-lasting and unavoidable occurrence of sufferings from the wrongdoings of their kin. The aim of charismatic healing was, as Hanisa emphasised, to 'cut off the ties of sin. God will help us to cut off all the chains of evil connecting our ancestors and us!' The words of her preaching actually spoke of the sense of oppression a woman faced in a contemporary situation. Articulating these women's distress and suppression, she even advocated that they should fight against these, instead of submissively accepting the situation. To fight against evils and adversaries, she underscored with assurance that the immediate and urgent method was to heal their wounded bodies with the blood of Christ.

Later on, Hanisa enquired into our willingness to share more about our own family histories. Mafisa said that all of her uncles had died of either accidents or cancer, which was considered as a curse caused by her grandmother's practice of spirit mediumship. Mafisa then showed her strong belief in God to undo her linkage with the wrong doings of her forebears. Dalaita expressed her urgent thought that the misfortunes of inharmonious marital relations and poverty would come to a halt in the generation of her children. Then she encouraged all the women in the church to become the 'beam of a house' to lead their families out of the curse of inheritable sins and connections with evil. Here the supplicants' testimonies came to an end.

Playing the role of the host, Rukai women had prepared in advance some refreshments and drinks for the intermission. All the participants chatted in a slightly relaxed mood, for lively or overjoyed conversations were taken to be an obstacle for the healing to come.

### *Christ the healer mends the afflicted and powerless*

Before the commencement of the healing, the female Paiwan priest recalled her experience that her prayers for collecting a huge amount of money for the church's sake had been realised by means of her devout prayers. The Paiwan priest preached resolutely in a pitch high enough to create a fervent atmosphere in the church by saying, 'If you devoutly believe in God, God will not fail you. When you reveal your distress to God, you and your family will be delivered from distress and then illness will be cured!' On hearing this, some women from the congregation shouted 'Amen!'

With the priest's announcement of the start of the healing, women began to walk in unison to the aisle in front of the pulpit. The priest again stressed that Christ is definitely able to heal a wide range of illnesses and sufferings, such as 'bodily illness and pain, broken familial relations, as well as those problems to which you cannot find a resolution'. At the same moment, the church pianist started to gently play several hymns, and throughout the entire process the slow melody suffused this Gothic-style church.

In the pages to follow, I first describe the procedures of healing practice, or as Presbyterian priests put it, 'the hand-laying prayers', followed by an analysis. First of all, the priest asked the supplicant to identify her sufferings. If the targeted illness could be unmistakably identified with one or several corresponding bodily parts, such as heart disease or injured legs, then the priest, with the left hand raised high towards the sky, would lay the right hand on the bodily part and then say prayers. Generally, the priest would raise his or her voice and then address prayers in a high pitch; besides, the way he or she said prayers to God appeared to me to be much as if he or she spoke on behalf of someone else. Meanwhile, the content of prayers usually were—there were some minor variations in the sequences and choice of words throughout the course of the rite—'In the name of Jesus Christ, I beg your blood to purify this sister, and make her a brand new, healthy person in your kingdom'. In some cases, the priest would say, 'In the name of Christ, I command that you, the evil and ailment, get out of this sister's body immediately!' three times; then the priest turned to the supplicant while saying in a firm and resolute tone with a tinge of persuasion, 'With the blood of Christ, you [the supplicant] have now been purified and cured. No more evil will bother you from now on!' If the supplicants asked for the cure of a non-somatic illness, for example, domestic relations, unemployment or shortage of money, the priest would lay the right hand on the head of the supplicant so that the healing potency of Christ would fill the supplicant and work.

When the priest was saying prayers to heal Mafisa, for instance, I saw that she suddenly cried out hard and her body obviously trembled so that she could not stand on her feet. At that very moment, one stand-by male assistant—appointed by the priest in advance for men were said to have more strength to hold the supplicant—just approached to hold Mafisa steadily as she was almost fainting. She then was brought to lie down on the ground and 'rest in God's arms', as the priest put it. Another assistant covered Mafisa with a jacket. Some women would wail and their bodies would tremble seriously and involuntarily at the same time, while some even fainted in the midst of prayers. The supplicants' wailing and shouting carried on till the end of the rite. During the course of the healing practices, the sound of the crying



of bitter tears and piercing shouting overlaid the gentleness and calm of the hymns from the church piano.

Other Rukai women from other groups expressed their distress owing to economic hardship. Tanay, for example, knelt down and told the priest that she was short of money because her husband had been laid off; now she had to do several odd jobs to earn a little money for the children. 'I feel helpless', she said in tears, 'I hope Jesus Christ could cure my worry. Lack of money keeps me from looking after my children'. When receiving the laying on of the priest's hand, Tanay suddenly shouted out shrilly several times, crying out with all her might, and then she fainted as the prayers ended. Likewise, Gainiya accused her husband of imbibing alcohol after work all the time, and said that after drinking he would even verbally abuse her and her children. 'We never make enough money to live on' and she described herself as 'carrying all the burden of making a living on my shoulders. I am like a water buffalo yoked with burdens of livelihood'. She wailed bitterly and staggered until near the end of the priest's prayers.

After all the supplicants were 'cured and purified', all the priests jointly addressed a benediction to the congregation, which the Rukai think is the most important part of the gathering and services, on the grounds that all those in attendance are assured of receiving God's blessing from the benediction.

### **Tormented Bodies, Potent Spirits**

These confession-like testimonies offered by Rukai women can be seen as a kind of 'the technology of self' (cf. Foucault 1997; Robbins 2004) in that they try to trace their afflictions back to the sets of relatedness of which they are part. Strictly speaking, the image about these women's sense of 'self' through inner reflection, in the final analysis, makes sense with reference to relatedness.

#### *Personhood, relatedness, and agency*

From Rukai women's testimonies, it is clear that a person is imagined as a site of kin relatedness. As I noted in Chapter 2, Rukai notions of personhood are bound up with the recognition of both sides of both parents of a person. Notably, the image of personhood with reference to the configuration of relatedness on both sides is expressed in myriad personal attributes: talents, personality, achievements, bodily dispositions (walking, speaking or the way the body moves) as well as physical health/illness. In addition, it is indicated that the view of the multiple origins of a



person hinges upon the acknowledgement of the parent's equal contribution to the making of a baby. Therefore, I argue that, aside from being the embodiment of the parents' work, a person is construed as a site encompassing sets of relatedness prior to his/her existence, and in turn the actions of a person are thought to be the enactment of the biography and personal qualities of ancestors.

My depiction of Rukai personhood seems to bear a resemblance to what Marilyn Strathern describes as the construct of personhood in Melanesia (M. Strathern 1988), insofar as a person is imagined as a composite of relations. In what follows, however, I point out that this seeming similarity between Rukai and Melanesian notions of personhood in effect is premised on different perceptions concerning gender, personhood, agency, and domination.

Put briefly (though with the risk of oversimplification), in Melanesia a person is regarded as 'a microcosm of relations' (M. Strathern 1988: 131), which contains 'a generalized sociality within' (1988: 13) through a series of gendered exchanges. Thus a person is thought to encompass, and also objectify, both femaleness and maleness due to the history of exchanges. In order to conduct exchange, two identical androgynous persons (e.g., a married couple) have to elicit the desired part (femaleness or maleness) from each other by creating a difference between them, that is, by evincing or 'seeing' the figure of the exchange partner as if he/she were composed of that desired part only. As a result, he/she is able to elicit or draw out this desired part and then delivers the part desired by the other. What is extracted (object or work) from an exchange partner are sets of relations that are drawn into exchanges in the past, and the totality of which in turn are contained in the partner. Given that all exchanges are an exchange of relations between gendered terms in Melanesia, the gender identity of an individual person is implicated by the nature of exchange that he/she conducts, and in turn the gift exchanged objectifies a person's gendered identity at a particular (historical) moment (of exchange). As Marilyn Strathern puts it, therefore, 'Gender refers to the internal relations between parts of persons, as well as to their externalization as relations between persons' (1988: 185).

Predicated on Melanesian notions of gender and personhood, Marilyn Strathern further develops an alternative view of agents, opposed to the image of a unitary self who is an autonomous agent and the singular author of their acts (1988: 162). A Melanesian agent is 'one who from his or her own vantage point acts with another's in mind' (1988: 272), and therefore all exchanges are seen as an exchange of their viewpoints/perspectives (1988: 230, 241-2, 261, 275). Consider the case of how a Hagen wife is associated with her crops via relations with her husband. A Hagen wife is an agent who does the action (to wit, her agency), whereas her husband's

perspective accounts for the cause of her act whence the cause of an act splits from its agency (1988: 273).

Furthermore, this Hagen case enables us to make sense of the nature of domination in the conjugal relationships in Melanesia. A man's violent behaviour is seen as male excess in the conjugal relationship and is bound up with his assertiveness (e.g. aggrandisement of maleness) in interpersonal relations. This indeed overrides exchange of viewpoints in normal relationships in the Melanesian context. Hence, the action of male domination could be construed as that an agent in a male form forces the man 'to find an adequate aesthetic vehicle for the capacities that have grown within him' (1988: 338). In the occurrence of violence, it is also suggested that a woman, as one who compels a man to act, may also be the register of the actions (1988: 335). However, her depiction as such, as Lisette Josephides points out, implies that domination, or a husband's violence towards his wife, is seen as a category 'with no substantive, objective reality in the structuring of social relations' (Josephides 1991: 148).

Let us return to the Rukai case. First and foremost, what places Rukai notions of personhood in contrast to their Melanesian counterparts, I suggest, rests precisely in that potency/power overrides gender with regards to the indicator for difference; though in marriage gender difference is marked, power still intersects with, or sometimes outranks, gender.<sup>4</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 2, persons in the Rukai context are thought to share sameness in general, and then gendered persons are made apparent and visible only through gatherings and practices of same-sex persons in order to partake of genderedness in the collectivity. After marriage, the idiom of potency/power marks gender difference, which accounts for the division of labour in a house as noted earlier. More significantly, it is emphasised that the ungended whole composed of a married couple makes a contribution to a house. Therefore, I argue that it is precisely the ungended wholeness, rather than either of a couple, that possesses the capacity of fertility for domestic reproduction.

Above all, the Rukai hold a different view of agents and agency. As described in Chapter 3, a person as a worker is thought of as an agent in that their efforts bring creation and/or transformation upon the world, such as making a baby, making food or building a house. In work practices, agency is clearly acknowledged. On the other hand, in ritual performance, a practitioner is simply a vehicle for an ancestral agency

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<sup>4</sup> When marriage payments are negotiated, the relative social rankings, indicative of power differences, of the houses on both sides come to the fore. If a male commoner marries a female noble, he needs to pay a huge amount of marriage payment, including money and precious items such as nice clothes and jewellery. Here, power still overrides gender in terms of marriage payments.

that brings transformation upon the condition of life. There is, moreover, a third significant constituent of a Rukai agent. When people attribute one's achievement or bodily dispositions to transmission from ancestors, it is only in the agency of actions (when a real practice is completed) that others, not the agent, can identify the cause for actions.

The final point for comparison is about domination/power in relation to gender, in the conjugal relationship in particular. A Rukai man/husband, as a more powerful person than a woman/his wife, is considered to offer care (e.g., a wage for food) for his dependents. A woman/wife conducts domestic chores and/or garden work as her duty of care to maintain a house. The balance of asymmetry in power in this couple is established upon their respective fulfilment of what they should do, that is, they walk their own gendered paths, as noted in Chapter 2, and then they submerge themselves into an ungendered whole objectified in the image of an ungendered house. Put differently, the image of an ungendered house which concretises their collaborative efforts attests to the balance between husband and wife in terms of potency.

As mentioned in Chapters 4 and 7, a husband's habit of imbibing alcohol after work or due to unemployment is thought of as the antithesis of his duty of care as well as of domestic reproduction. Here, a man as a wage worker overrides the image of a man as a dutiful husband, in which case a woman/wife is forced to transform herself into a person more powerful than a man as a wage worker in the sense that she is now the only person burdened with the double duty of care for her house. Therefore, drinking alcohol makes a less powerful woman into a more powerful figure than a man/undutiful husband, and the prior balance in power between them is disrupted. This in turn leads to another asymmetry in power, in which the woman becomes more powerful because she conducts work practices designated for both of the couple. She in herself therefore takes on the image of an ungendered whole in terms of her practices, and the house presents itself as if it were the magnification of this image.

However, this symbolic transformation of conjugal relations in terms of relativity of power still cannot eliminate the 'substantive, objective reality' of violence. The Rukai do not disguise or dismiss this objectivity of violence; indeed, they firmly regard violence, as extreme asymmetry in power, as necessarily leading to the break up of a conjugal relationship. Accompanying alcohol abuse, physical violence, as a form of action to demonstrate a man's excessive power, is subsequently harnessed by regaining the prior balance of power in the conjugal relationship. However, the exercise of excessive power as such leads to another



irreversible asymmetry in power that brings forth a woman's legitimate demand for divorce. As a consequence, an ungended whole falls apart. Physical violence, correlating with experience of wage labour, serves as a form of action for a man to reclaim that he is still the (assumed) more powerful one of a couple. The idiom of potency/power inherent in work practices is constitutive of conjugal relationships, but on the other hand, the corporeal exercise of a man's excessive power materially leads to the defacement of the image of an ungended whole of which he used to be part.

With these Rukai views of personhood, potency, and agency in mind, let us return to the examination of charismatic healing practices, a level of social phenomenon connecting conjugal relationships with other sets of social relations.

*Potency, asymmetry in power, and bodily afflictions*

The above discussion enables me to investigate how the assumed asymmetry in power amongst people could be alleviated by practices indicative of the 'soft heart' of the powerful, as otherwise the asymmetry in power will become permanent. As shown in Chapter 7, a person of power is thought to have a 'soft heart' towards the powerless or the pitiable by offering help and care; otherwise a powerful person will be criticised as having a 'hard heart', implying one's lack of compassion and pity on the less powerful. Notably, the pitiable and deprived take for granted a powerful person's practice implicative of pity, and thereby no sense of subjugation ensues accompanying their asking for help from the powerful. However, beyond the village, as the Rukai engage in the capitalist economy, their emphasis on the character of the powerful often faces a power-holder who does not always share a similar value as to the morality of power. A case in point is their encounter with employers.

It appears obvious to pinpoint the abuse of the power of an employer because, as seen in Chapter 6, measures indicative of profit orientation are often deployed in the work process. Nonetheless, I am concerned more with how the Rukai think of an employer's acts in terms of the relativity of power, and also how different kinds of power—in effect different social relations—come into play. As shown earlier, the Rukai often consider that the practice of exploitation stems precisely from the employer's lack of compassion or pity, that is, from an employer with a hard heart who fails to pity the relatively powerless workers. One apparent consequence of their encounter with exploitation is their physical injuries or damage, as seen in the case of betel vine workers; thus I suggest that pain and illness simultaneously embody and concretise the practice of coercion/exploitation in the capitalist economy. On the other hand, if we take into consideration how the afflicted body is often identified



with the act of a powerful antagonist, then it is fair to say that the bodies of ailing workers in themselves, far from standing for, actually objectify their lack of power. In other words, bodily afflictions in themselves at once concretise, embody, and objectify the relations of exploitation.

Given that bodily afflictions objectify relations of power in the capitalist economy, how is the charismatic healing practices, originating from Christianity, taken to 'heal' people's distress in the Rukai context? In healing practices, the most significant gesture is that of the hand-laying on the supplicant's head. Apart from being a (Christianity-informed) locus for the infusion of the Holy Spirit, the head of a Rukai person is thought to be where one's guardian spirit (*lekem*) dwells, and it is said to have a tiny interstice through which the guardian spirit will leave the body when a person dies. The permeability of the head/body, with the implication of a person's vulnerability to the world outside, allows exogenous potency to enter in order to empower the afflicted, and it accounts for the Rukai rite of 'strengthening a guardian spirit' (*asi lekem*), thereby making sense of the priest's prayers.

What is more, I was most struck by some elderly Christians' remarks that what resides on the head is God (*twa 'omas*, sharing the same term with the spirit which creates human beings in Taromak), and thus they are under his protection. The imagination of God on the head seems to signify that the making of personhood partakes of God's potency in a bodily sense, whilst paradoxically the native idea of a guardian spirit always implies the fluctuation of its potency and that it shares the mortality of the human being. Nevertheless, in an attempt to alleviate the harshness of coercive power, the Rukai turn to another source of power deemed to be more transcendent and compassionate—Christ on the crucifix. Through empowerment, consequently, it seems that the afflicted Rukai are given more potency to face what life will bring. At this point, I concur with Jean Comaroff's view that healing practices are deployed to address and redress social conflict, as well as healing the estrangement of a person caused by wage labour (1985:8-9, 197, 231).

However, I have to stress that it is *only* in the context of healing practices that the Rukai are supplicants required, for the sake of empowerment to cope with their vulnerability to power/the capitalist economy, to unmake their relatedness with kin who in the past practised 'idolatry'. My point is not to demonstrate that Rukai Christians start to adopt a unitary view of making relatedness with their kin by abandoning other views. It is never an either-or situation. I would rather underscore that through healing practices, especially the sharing of testimonies through reflection upon one's family history, Rukai Christians have experienced a different mode of being a person. A (Christian defined) person is still a site of relatedness, a

certain kind of relatedness which is approved of by Christian doctrine, whereas the rest of the relatedness, which is associated with idolatry, is then put aside.

As noted, given that bodily afflictions are bound up with people's experience of the capitalist economy and are an embodiment of power relations, one inevitable question to ask is how Rukai people's participation in charismatic healing practices is deployed to address and redress their condition of existence in a world dominated by capitalism. This hinges upon both how their agency is construed and how this agency is encoded in a specific form of action, to both of which I return below.

### *Potency, agency, and resistance*

How do we locate healing practices in a social world by reference to relations of power/exploitation which are both culturally constructed and socially experienced? In addition to the above symbolic analysis, I now aim to examine how the symbolic construction of this practice is associated intimately with people's social condition of existence. This is not only to say that the Rukai are agents in a monolithic sense; on the contrary, I intend to construe how their notions of agency and power come into play in the context of concrete practices.

First of all, I would identify the practice of healing amongst the Rukai with an act of resistance, and argue that people's participation in healing practices speaks of their experience of exploitation based on indigenous notions of personhood, power, and agency. Thus, I argue against the thesis that resistance is thought to take on the import of immediate political effectiveness of actions, or confrontation with the dominant (cf. Mitchell 1990). If resistance is understood in these terms only, then how do we deal with the phenomenon of the unsaid and inarticulate dimension of human suffering embedded in seemingly apolitical activities? At this point, I concur with Jean and John Comaroff (1991, 1992, 1997), who call into question the viewpoint that an act of resistance requires explicit consciousness and articulation. Above all, they direct our attention to another form of tacit, indirect resistance, which can be found 'when a people can be shown to express some measure of awareness of their predicament as victims of domination—and, better yet, can state the terms of their response' (1991: 31). Taken in this sense, the healing practice in which the Rukai participate counts as implicit, tacit resistance to wage labour.

My standpoint is neither to 'romanticize' nor to argue for 'the dignity or heroism of the resisters' (Abu-Lughod 1990:42, 53), nor is it intended to translate 'the apparently trivial into the fatefully political' (Sahlins 1993: 17). Conversely, it has much to do with how to acknowledge the powerless being 'taken as historical agents' (E. P. Thompson 1993 [1967]: 185). Hence, the attempt to demonstrate Rukai

people's agency by examining their participation in seemingly 'ineffective' resistance demands two tasks to substantiate it. The first is, in line with Sherry Ortner (1995, 1997, 2006), to explore the cultural construction of power and agency through the thickness of ethnography with respect to morality, justice, agency, and personhood ('subjecthood' as she puts it). The second is, I suggest, to regard resistance as the opposite of power. Given that power and agency are culturally constructed, resistance therefore is taken to be a cultural form of action to encode the agency of the less powerful. At this point, I contend that the dismissal of the concept of resistance is premised on the idea that resistance is defined by the exertion of coercive power from the dominant, and that consequently resistance taken in this sense addresses only political effectiveness.

The refusal of the concept of resistance is, I argue, the corollary of the Foucauldian notion of power. As Michel Foucault (1978) puts it, 'where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power' (1978: 95-6). The negation of resistance implies no more than that the powerless are enmeshed into the overwhelming network of power of which their agency is part (e.g., Ortner 2006: 143-7). Accordingly, there is no space or necessity for resistance, and this view grants the supremacy of the effects of power (coercion or culturally defined power or potency), though with the recognition of the culturally defined agency, over the possibility of an opposite voice from below, which cannot be explained away by and reduced to the effects of power, whatever it refers to. Given that there is no overarching view of power and agency, as demonstrated in the cases of both Melanesia and the Rukai, I suggest that this is exactly the same for resistance.

What does the view of seeing resistance as a cultural form of agency imply in the Rukai case? In Taromak, for instance, different forms of resistance are deployed when people are faced with different natures of power. In the first place, let us consider the case of coercion sensed by Rukai betel vine workers as shown earlier and also in Chapter 6. In the work process, Rukai workers clearly felt the coercion driven by an employer's sensitivity to labour time and wage payment. In response to the measures of coercion, workers improvise and develop tactics, such as discarding fewer betel leaves, in order to increase the amount of produce. In this circumstance, the act of resistance is taken in the import of counteracting the coercion from an employer, and this is what resistance is often taken to denote. If we consider the case of roselle workers indicated in Chapter 5, then act of resistance finds it in a less overt form of action such as embezzlement or pilfering, hinging upon how the relation between a worker and the product of one's labour is construed on the part of workers.



By contrast, when it comes to relations of power indexed in the idiom of potency, acts of resistance take on more subtle (visible and corporeal) forms. Given that the Rukai notion of potency stresses the embodiment of power in the locus of a person, a power struggle amongst people inevitably involves the human body to manifest and objectify it. As noted earlier, bodily afflictions do not just stand for the working of power relations; indeed, they are in themselves the concretisation of confrontation between the powerful and the powerless. This is the same for both Christians and non-Christians in Taronak. For instance, the practice of charismatic healing is thought to possess the capacity of healing, by drawing on the image of Christ the healer, to mend their tormented bodies, and simultaneously the abuse of power. In this context, some people feel the coercion of the capitalist economy (e.g., being sacked) and others experience a derived form of coercion via alcohol abuse or physical violence. Given that different kinds of power inherent in the capitalist economy are experienced by Rukai Christians somatically, the inarticulate form of resistance from them is inevitably expressed through the human body.

Even in the case of non-Christians, the Rukai ascribe their somatic illness to the experience of being exploited, and they adopt a form of action available to them, that is, imagining a desired job that enables them to get rid of the hardship. Despite the fact that the unintended consequence of their dream of employment might be to engage again in relations of exploitation, non-Christians' imagination of the (assumed) world of jobs without exploitation implicitly voices their agency, however illusory.

Taken together, the view that healing practices are tantamount to resistance is clearly made when we come to understand that the body is not only a metaphor for social relations (Comaroff 1985), but also a corporeal locus for the confrontation of potency/power from both sides. In the Rukai case, the body not only serves as a passive object for power to be inscribed upon (Foucault 1977), but also objectifies relations of power of different kinds (potency and coercion). Even in their imagination of a world of jobs without exploitation, I do not think that it should be interpreted as their subjugation to the logic of commodity economy. Only when the compliance, subordination, and submission of the dominated are not taken at face value and not explained away, I argue, is the sound of the resistance of the powerless heard.



## Conclusion

In this chapter, I investigated how Rukai people's experience of work is construed, and particularly focused on the following dimensions: firstly, the description of experiential sides—bodily and emotional—of people's performance of work as well as the idioms in which their experience is expressed; secondly, to scrutinise how relations of power of different kinds come into play insofar as one significant aspect of Rukai sociality plays off the relativity of potency (culturally defined power) between two confronting parties.

In the conjugal relationship, the division of labour is drawn along the lines of relative potency between husband and wife: a husband is responsible for heavy tasks in the garden or wage labour, whilst a wife is in charge of lighter tasks and domestic chores. The asymmetry in power is kept in balance on condition that both of the couple live up to their respective obligation, and in so doing the image of a house is founded upon their collaboration instead of highlighting one's contribution by downplaying or neglecting the other's effort. Even though a feeling of tiredness from doing domestic work will occur from time to time, Rukai mothers often take pride in the morally good deeds of members of their houses for the reason that no shame is brought to the house. However, this sort of feeling will be negated by the misconduct of their house members. In this regard, domestic work, along with the deeds of the members of a house, is bestowed with the making of domestic morality in terms of bringing no shame to a house.

Above all, both heavy drinking and physical violence account for why the asymmetry/balance in power will be thrown out of balance in conjugal relationships. The association of heavy drinking with a man's failure to conduct the duty of care in turn makes the wife take up the responsibility of sustaining a house all by herself, thereby clothing herself in the image of an ungendered whole. On the other hand, in the face of his wife being a more potent figure, a man reclaims his figure of the powerful one by means of the exertion of physical violence, which leads to divorce, the breakdown of a house by the wife's withdrawal from the constitution of an ungendered whole.

In the Rukai case, moreover, a person of power is viewed as having a soft heart to have pity on the less powerful, otherwise the asymmetry between them would be intensified and made permanent. In the eyes of the Rukai, this is the case for social relations in capitalism. Paradoxically, the entitlement of the powerless/workers to ask for pity from the powerful/employers conversely secures and reproduces the hierarchical relationships between them. That is, the idiom of pity, on the one hand,

allows the powerless to demand help or assistance from the one with more resources, but it seems to consolidate asymmetry in power on the other.

Moreover, both relations of power and experience of work are construed by female wage workers as bodily afflictions, and the body then comes to embody and concretise the relations and effect of exploitation in capitalism. I pointed out that bodily afflictions embody malevolent acts from one's powerful antagonist, and therefore the guardian spirit of the afflicted is thus overcome. Therefore, in work practices, bodily afflictions objectify simultaneously the experiential side of performing work and relations of power of different kinds.

Based on their notions of personhood, agency, and power, I also argued that Rukai people's participation in charismatic healing practices is tantamount to being resistance to the wage labour which afflicts them. Resistance, as a form of agency, provides a cultural form of action available to the workers in Taronak. All the distress and torment with respect to wage labour, as the embodiment and objectification of relations of power and experiential construction of wage labour, is considered to be redressed and repaired through charismatic healing practices, in which all the wounded are healed by a more transcendent and compassionate persona of power, namely, Christ on the crucifix. Though ineffectively, healing practices offer a form of action through which Rukai people voice the working of the relentless power of capitalism through bodily afflictions, and by which both bodily illness and the working of exploitation upon them are simultaneously healed.

Nevertheless, it is suggested that the Christian priest introduces a transcendent and compassionate power to heal and redress the afflictions from exploitation, while through the rite the supplicant is represented as making connections with God by virtue of unmaking (part of) the relatedness with kin. This is another paradox. Even though the supplicants' intention in taking part in charismatic healing is directed to rehabilitate domesticity in terms of physical wellbeing and economic security, and even though wage labour is still a pivot for their daily life, the delineation of multiple realities in which domesticity engages in capitalism attests to the supplicants' agency and imagination in the midst of their encounter with wage labour.

## Chapter 9

### Conclusion

I have argued that the configuration of how the Rukai experience the capitalist economy simultaneously involves relatedness and work/labour. Far from seeing relatedness as discrete from the economy, I instead emphasised that relatedness and the economy are mutually constructed in myriad social contexts. At the level of an individual person, in the first place, the recognition of a couple's equal contribution indexed in the metaphor of garden produce in relation to making a baby reveals that a person is the embodiment of both relatedness and work or economic practice. In effect, this underlines the salience of working practices with respect to both personhood and relatedness. Meanwhile, the agency of a person as an actor is made apparent through his/her own practice, in contrast to the case of a person as a vehicle through which ancestral agency is channelled to exert influence upon the human world.

As for making relatedness through marriage, industriousness in work serves as a quality that an ideal marriage partner is thought to possess so that a couple is able to sustain members of their house. Prominently, diligence in work is imagined to inscribe the human body after ongoing practices of garden work, especially when it comes to judging a woman as a marriage partner. In contrast, a groom-to-be should provide bride service to demonstrate his disposition of offering help to kin on the bride's side. In addition, a man's ability to bring the product of labour home is of the utmost importance in regard to the responsibility of the head of a house. In other words, work is a practice attesting to a person's quality and constitutive of sets of relatedness that one is part of.

In the domestic economy, the division of labour is drawn rather along the lines of relative strength than of gender on the grounds that a person is usually seen as ungendered. This is the case for the division of domestic work amongst siblings and for that of garden work between a married couple. By contrast, gender difference amongst adolescents is made manifest through people's participation in certain gendered practices of work with same-sex peers. That is, working practices are gendered when a person's status of marriageability comes into focus, whereas the rest of the time work is ungendered as to its actors, since at issue is the centrality of

co-operation amongst co-workers (siblings or a couple) for the sake of domestic maintenance.

Furthermore, the configuration of the relations associating work with play principally correlates with one's position in various sets of relatedness (children, parents, grandparents or the deceased) rather than work or play gaining a monolithic import as exclusive of or antithetical to each other in capitalist society (cf. Parkin 1979). Significantly, the meaning of work cannot make sense without taking into account people's affections and emotions in the Rukai context. The father, the head of a house, works to care for children whilst the mother's doing of both domestic and non-profit ridden garden work in essence register (culturally defined) parental, familial love for their children. In the light of this, practices of work are not only about mere subsistence but also driven by the parents' affection for and emotions towards their children, though the manner of showing emotions takes on different forms (money or food, for instance).

With respect to Rukai people's engagement in wage labour, money is considered to embody the human effort and fertility inherent in working practices, and therefore is thought to contribute to either domestic expenses or help with kin, and thus relatedness at both levels is perpetuated. Consequently, wage labour shares a resemblance with garden produce for the reason that both of them occupy the pivotal position of sustaining domesticity. In this case, the Rukai symbolism of money reveals one aspect of their encounter with capitalism by locating money/a wage in indigenous transactional orders (Bloch & Parry 1989).

Aside from that, the import of working practices is also linked with the view that the product of labour carried out in (culturally defined) workplaces is often designated with the capacity to nurture the lives in a house. On the other hand, very often the significance of domestic work is taken for granted, and remains unnoticed or unmarked in Rukai people's daily life. However, the importance of housework in domestic reproduction, as seen in the case of women's cooking for villagers in the context of mourning, is revealed and recognised at the time of the negation both of work and of life. As a result, I argued that domestic work, far from being asocial or unproductive, comes to partake of making domestic sociality.

At the level of the work process, I suggested that different modes of wage payment, or how labour time is materialised into money, have as much weight in Rukai people's experience of wage labour as the indigenous notions of work, personhood, and relatedness which are embedded in long-term transactional orders. In the piece rate system, a wage is seen as a reward whilst doing piecework is taken to be help to kin. By contrast, a kin-employer views relations of production and a



wage as they are. Remarkably, reciprocity works as both morality and exploitation whilst wage labour works as both paid work and help. Most of all, labour on a piece rate basis is experienced as the enjoyment of conviviality in which kin-workers conduct work in the company of others to enact domestic sociality.

Moreover, with respect to the division of collective earnings, relatedness overrides the reckoning of individual contributions in agricultural labour. It is precisely a house rather than an individual person that makes a unit entitled to an equal share of earnings. As a consequence, kin mutuality and the moral code of help submerge individual contributions; or put differently, the efforts of individuals in work feed at once intra-house relatedness and connectedness between houses of kin. Viewed from this perspective, the division of a wage, or the wage payment in the piece rate system, neither leads to the creation of the individuality of a worker as its capitalist counterpart (e.g., Marx 1976[1867]) nor does money paid to the Rukai play a critical role in social transformation as other scholars assert (e.g., Simmel 1990). I would rather emphasise that Rukai people's experience of work on a piece rate basis conforms to the point that short-term transactions could make sense with reference to the long-term transactions implicative of kinship morality, while on the other hand money participates in making relatedness in a real sense. Nonetheless, it should be borne in mind that measures of exploitation and the making of relations of production are disguised in both relatedness and kinship morality, thereby leading to the intricate entanglement of relatedness and capitalism.

By contrast, work on the basis of a time rate is experienced otherwise. A wage is redolent of previous experience of hard labour in terms of prolonged labour time in a factory or like workplaces. A kin-employer considers cash cropping to be paid work rather than as a job to help kin, and in a similar vein, a wage is directly related to profit. In spite of an employer's provision of gifts to workers, no other moral codes concerning relatedness participate in the manufacture of relations of production. Besides, paid work is construed as part of bodily dispositions since staying at home is described as boredom, and at the same time as a waste of time, for no wage is obtained. At this point, one day's time is imagined as money, as in capitalist society; meanwhile this too discloses the importance of the provision of labour for the sake of feeding the members of a house.

Indeed, an employer deploys the practice of gift-giving to workers in order to trigger the speeding up of work, whereas workers recognise the anticipated effects of gifts to extract more value from them. Put another way, both parties recognise the effects of gifts and also acquiesce in the necessity for gift-giving in order to facilitate exploitation, though this kind of work appears to be different from its piece rate

counterpart. In effect, relations of production bring forth the creation of social distinction based on the fact that both sides do not resort to moral codes or mutuality with regard to codes of conduct in the time rate system. I then suggested that this is closely linked to the objectivity of paying a daily wage to workers, in which an employer clearly is aware of the correlation between a daily wage and profit-making. It is, I argued, an employer's recognition of the imperative nature of a daily wage payment that is conducive to the perception of relations of production in 'economic' instead of moral terms. As a result, the separation of relatedness from 'the economic' comes into being in the time work system whereby relations of production are barely disguised in the cloak of kin relatedness, even though the extraction of surplus value is performed via an act of gift-giving.

At another level, the rupture between relatedness and 'the economic' as such reveals one modality of motivation regarding economic practices amongst the Rukai of Taromak. In various chapters, I touched upon other modalities of motivation for work with respect to different aspects of making relatedness. A Rukai mother's planting of millet is more driven by love and attention for her children than by a calculating mind set, whereas a Rukai father would see money as the actualisation of care for his house members. Aside from that, the owner of roselle gardens bases his motive for cash cropping upon both the obligation of inheritance of land from his ancestors and the anticipated criticism from villagers. Likewise, roselle workers regard their labour as a practice of help as if it were the realisation of kin mutuality. More strikingly, adolescents consider carrying out wage labour with their peers to be a way of maintaining friendship, memory, and a shared life. Therefore, affections, kinship morality, friendship, and monetary calculation come to present us with various modalities of the 'economic rationale' in the Rukai context.

Not only do relatedness and kinship morality take part in the configuration of the economic rationale, but also certain capitalistic categories are incorporated into the making of relatedness. At one level, to perform obligatory communal labour in a contemporary context is thought to be synonymous with wage labour so that a wage should be paid to workers. However, the opposing view stresses the salience of kinship morality in conducting such obligatory labour. Accordingly, the discrepancy in the notions of work time draws a line between domestic reproduction and kin relatedness at the communal level, though in other cases these two aspects interlock, as shown earlier. Here these two aspects of making relatedness in relation to both work and time are construed differently and even antagonistically. At another level, time for kin is then given priority over the notion of time being money on certain social occasions (weddings and mourning), though it is found that the monetary

image of time did occur at times.

Drawing on these contrasting yet interconnected conceptions of time and work, I argued that capitalist categories, such as a wage or labour time, play a role in Rukai people's daily perceptions of how domesticity could be sustained, and more significantly, that these capitalist categories are even made equivalent to what domestic reproduction relies upon, namely, the centrality of work. On the other hand, we can also find the incompatibility between time for kin and a monetary image of time in the contexts of wedding and mourning. At issue is that time for kin is construed as keeping kin company, which is thought to be reciprocated only by like company.

Apart from the close association between capitalist economic practices and making relatedness, I also examined how the making of domesticity is possible during unemployment. The recourse to kin mutuality in terms of giving food or looking for jobs is an immediate, common way to cope with the jobless, and this is grounded on the indivisibility of siblingship. Another way of dealing with unemployment is the reliance upon the government to find them jobs as the realisation of the morality of power on the part of a superior. Indeed, the government is imagined as a caretaker, whilst the ruled (the unemployed in particular) spontaneously portray themselves as pitiable and powerless in the face of the powerful. Hence the provision of jobs to the jobless is thought of as the expression of a superior's pity towards an inferior. Taken together, mutuality, a superior's duty of care, and the idioms of emotion like pity underlie a variety of practices implicative of relatedness that make possible domesticity when the jobless fail to do so.

However, this brings two consequences in its wake. One is that unemployment draws the association between domesticity and wage labour much tighter. The other is that a man and a woman are thought to contribute to domesticity in gendered forms, that is, wage labour is more associated with what a man as the head of a house should perform, whereas a woman is more linked with domestic work, though in some cases she needs to work for pay. This seems to conform to the divide between the domestic and the economic, between productive labour and (seemingly) unproductive labour, as well as their gendered connotations in capitalist society. I have rather argued that these divides and their gendered implications are, on the one hand, due to Rukai people's profound engagement in capitalism; on the other, the configuration of labour in relation to both gender and domestic reproduction involves people's habitual division of labour, classifications of work/labour, and relatedness as well as gender constructs. In the light of this, it is indicated that domesticity plays as critical a part in Rukai people's (capitalist) working practices as the capitalist

economic practices and categories which are drawn into and made part of the making of domesticity.

Despite the fact that wage labour is celebrated as such, the other side of Rukai people's experience of wage labour is instead suffused with distress, suffering, and afflictions, all of which attest to the fact that the exploitation inherent in wage labour is experienced bodily and emotionally. More than that, the experience of wage labour exerts an impact upon conjugal relations, especially a husband's alcohol abuse after work, or after being sacked or laid off. This in turn inflicts emotional wounds on the wife, or even turns into physical violence towards her. It is then understandable that Rukai women participate in Christian charismatic healing practices for the purpose of delivering the human body from the afflictions of labour, and that the embodied experience of exploitation, or power asymmetry in the economic process, is conceived to be alleviated thereby through the practice of repairing distress. In this sense, the practice of curing people of afflictions of labour via charismatic healing, I argued, amounts to an act of implicit resistance to wage labour/capitalism.



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